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THE SUNDAY GOSPELS

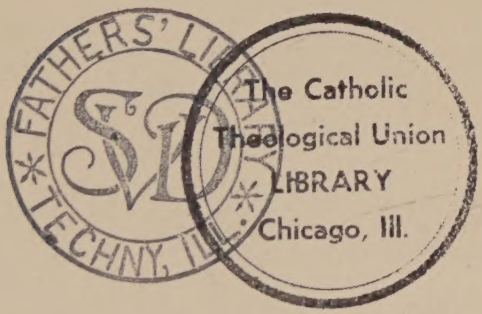
EXPLAINED TO CHILDREN

FOR USE IN SCHOOL AND CHURCH

WITHDRAWN

BY

REV. M. PARKS



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JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY

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THE SUNDAY GOSPELS EXPLAINED TO CHILDREN

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jesus Stills the Storm at Sea

Preparation. This Gospel is closely connected with the preceding. Which were the two miracles worked by our Lord immediately after the Sermon on the Mount? . . . A third miracle followed at once. Jesus went into St. Peter's house and cured his mother-in-law, who was lying sick of a fever. It was evening, and many people were carried to Him possessed by evil spirits, and He drove out the evil spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. The crowd grew larger and larger, and at last our Lord bade His disciples to put out to sea. (Which sea?) Then one of the scribes came and said to Him: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go." Our Lord answered: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head." This meant: "I am poor, and whoever wants to be my disciple must also become poor." This was enough for the scribe, who would not hear of poverty because he liked a life of comfort. Also a disciple, probably Philip, came up to Him and said: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Jesus said to him: "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead." He meant by these words: "Your relations are spiritually dead; leave them and follow me." Then the events described in the Gospel took place.

I. Gospel. Matth. viii, 23-27.

1. The Storm at Sea.
2. The Fear of the Disciples.
3. The Calm at Sea.

II. EXPLANATION.

1. *The Storm at Sea.* The first picture presented to us is charming. It is twilight and the little boats are sailing quietly over the sea. (St. Mark tells us that there were other ships there too.) On the shore are crowds of people looking after Jesus with deep respect, but He is resting in the boat. Suddenly the pleasant scene changes, and a terrible sight appears before our eyes. A violent hurricane suddenly arises and swoops down upon the sea, raising great waves, so that the boat is tossed up and down as if it were their plaything. The water dashes into the boat on both sides and every moment it is likely to sink or to be driven on to the land and wrecked.

Did not Jesus know beforehand that there would be a storm? And if He knew it, how could He go into such danger? . . .

Jesus knew everything, but He wanted to strengthen His disciples in their faith. He worked this miracle especially for the Apostles, who were to experience His power just when they were in the greatest danger. . . .

It is remarkable, too, that the storm came on so very suddenly. There are generally some signs warning us of the approach of a tempest, and most of the disciples were skilful fishermen, well able to interpret such signs. . . . The lake lies very low, about six or seven hundred feet below sea-level, and during the day the heat is often terrific; but in the evening it is not unusual for a violent storm to come up quite unexpectedly and to lash the water to fury.

[It is quite possible that this mighty storm was due to the action of the evil spirits, who were angry that our Lord had driven them out of the people who were possessed; for Satan, the prince of this world, and his angels use the elements for their wicked purposes.

This is expressly taught in Holy Scripture. In writing to the Ephesians (vi, 12), St. Paul says: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness (i. e. sin), against the spirits of wickedness in high places," or, according to another translation, in the air.]

2. *The Fear of the Disciples.* How do the disciples act in time of danger? They try with all their might to conquer the storm, but it is useless. They are then seized with a terrible fear and think that their last hour is at hand. What ought they to have thought in their distress? . . . "The Lord is with us, we are in God's hand." But they fancied that because Jesus was asleep, He was unaware of the danger, so they lost all confidence and cried: "Lord, save us, we perish!" This want of confidence was a fault. How did our Saviour rebuke them? . . . "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" That means: "Where is your faith? are you still so weak?"

[How could our Lord sleep during the noise of the storm? He could control His own nature, and it was His will to sleep, in order to test His disciples.]

3. *The Calm on the Sea.* Then Christ showed that He was Lord of nature. Stretching out His hand, He cried to the angry water: "Peace, be still," and at once a solemn stillness prevailed. Was this not perhaps the result of chance? No, for when a storm abates, the tossing of the waves continues for a long time, and this was not the case here. Christ speaks a word, and there is a great calm.

What impression did the miracle make upon the people who witnessed it? All in the boat were filled with fear and amazement, saying: "What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?" Our Lord had done what He wanted, for His disciples were

strengthened in their faith, and others too were led to believe in Him.

Questions for repetition. Where did our Lord seek rest after His hard work during the day? . . . What severe test was applied to the disciples' faith? . . . How did our Lord blame His followers for the weakness of their faith? . . . How did He save them from danger of death? . . . How did the people who were saved express their astonishment? . . .

III. Application.

(1) *Points for instruction.* (a) The Gospel contains clear evidence of our Lord's Divinity. Not only did all diseases disappear at His Word, but the forces of nature were silent and obeyed Him. All who beheld the miracle, arrived at once at the right conclusion, viz., that Christ must be higher and greater than man. "Who is this, that the winds and sea obey Him?" Who is Jesus Christ? . . . What evidence did He give of His divinity? . . . What miracles did He work? . . .

(b) Christ is truly God, but He is also truly man. How can we see that to-day? . . . He was tired after preaching so much, and fell asleep in the boat. How can Christ be tired? . . . He is human like ourselves and has a human nature. How many natures has Christ? . . . What then do we believe about Christ? . . . From whom did the Son of God take His human nature?

(c) The disciples showed in time of danger that their faith was weak, and, therefore, Jesus found fault with them. When are we strong in faith? . . . How do people sin by doubts concerning the faith? . . .

(2) *What importance has this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . We ought to be always growing stronger in faith. Many storms and terrible temptations assail our hearts, but we ought not

to be afraid and lose confidence. This is the lesson that our holy Mother the Church teaches us to-day. St. Bernard says: "If the world rages and Satan lets loose his fury, and the flesh rebels, I will still trust in Thee, O Lord! For who has ever trusted in Thee and nevertheless been put to shame?"

(3) *Our life is like a voyage across the sea.* There are often terrible storms to encounter—attacks from without and temptations from within. What ought we to do in danger? The chief thing is never to lose confidence. The Lord is with us, so let us cry with the disciples, but with perfect trust in Him, "Lord, save us, we perish."

(4) *The boat upon the sea is a type of the Church of Christ.* Many storms have already assailed her, and she has been hated and slandered by Jews and heathens. Remember the first three centuries after our Lord's death. It often seemed as if He were asleep; but in the hour of greatest danger He always arose and commanded the storm, saying: "Peace, be still." If the Church had been founded by men, she would long have ceased to exist, but she was founded by God. In what words did our Lord foretell the triumph of His Church? . . .

[N.B.—This Gospel may be read on one of the Sundays after Epiphany. On these Sundays we study the action of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and the significance of the Gospel is then: The Church of Christ has always survived all storms and will never be overwhelmed by them. For Christ is with her, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." The Holy Ghost is the soul of the Church—therefore we must have confidence.]

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parable of the Cockle Among the Wheat

Preparation. Children never get tired of hearing stories, and the people in the East were still like children. Our Saviour knew this, and therefore He generally talked in parables. What parables do you know? . . . To-day's Gospel contains a very beautiful and instructive parable—that of the cockle among the wheat. We do not know when and where our Lord uttered this parable, and there is no need for us to know. The chief thing is that we should thoroughly understand the lesson that it teaches.

I. Gospel. Matth. xiii, 24-30.

1. The Good Seed and the Cockle.
2. The Growth of the Seed and Cockle.
3. The Wheat and Cockle at the Harvest.

The parable is always only the outside or husk, the truth that it contains is the kernel. Or the parable is the earth, and the lesson that it teaches is the gold hidden in the earth. Let us look first at the outside or husk, and then at the kernel; first at the parable, and then at its interpretation.

II. Explanation.

(*a*) *The Parable.*

(1) *The Good Seed and the Cockle.* The farmer sowed only good wheat in his field. What spoiled it? . . . This weed is called cockle or tares, and grows freely in wheatfields in Palestine. Both shoot up at the same time and are so much alike, that it is difficult even for an experienced eye to distinguish them. But as soon as the

fruit is formed, any child can easily recognize which is the weed. Hence "when the blade was sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle."

(2) *The Growth of the Seed and Cockle.* The servants were astonished and could not account for the appearance of the cockle. They had themselves sown the good seed and knew that the soil was well cleared of weeds. But the farmer knew well enough that some enemy, moved by feelings of revenge, had come secretly at night, when they were all asleep, and had sown cockle amongst the wheat. What could the servants do to repair the mischief? "Wilt thou that we go and gather it up?"

(3) *The Wheat and Cockle at the Harvest.* What was the farmer's decision? . . . It was dangerous to pull up the cockle as that might destroy a good deal of the wheat, for the cockle grows in tufts and its roots are intertwined with those of the wheat. To let them grow together until the harvest seemed the safer plan. But what was to happen at the harvest? . . . The usual method in the East is to tie the dangerous and poisonous weed up in bundles and burn it. This causes much work, but is the best way of preventing it from doing further harm.

Questions for repetition. How came the cockle amongst the wheat? . . . How did the servants want to get rid of it? . . . Why did the farmer not allow them to carry out their plan? . . . When did he intend to separate the cockle from the wheat?

(b) *The Interpretation of the Parable.*

Now we are going to look at the kernel and find out what our Lord intended to teach us by it. The parable is easy enough to understand, and yet the disciples could not discover its meaning. Our Lord might well reproach them, as He sometimes did, with being very dull and not understanding Him, although He had been

a long time with them. When He had sent away the people, His Disciples asked Him to explain to them the parable of the cockle, and He expounded it thus: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the Kingdom, and the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle, therefore, is gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matth. xiii, 36-43).

(1) *Good Seed and Cockle.* You can easily understand it all now. The sower is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. He sowed the seed of divine truth in the world. He calls Himself humbly the "Son of Man," because He became Man in order to make men the children of God. *The field is the world.* The whole world? No, only the Church, God's kingdom on earth. Christ Himself says: "The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field." "The good seed are the children of the Kingdom." Jesus meant the good Christians, who receive the word of God and hold the Catholic faith and lead good lives. "The cockle are the children of the wicked one." Are these the Jews and heathen? No, for they do not belong to God's Church at all. Jesus meant bad Christians, people who receive the bad seed into their hearts and have not the Faith and do not live as Christians. These are the children of the wicked one, children of the devil, for they have the devil as their father (John viii, 44). Who sows the cockle? The devil,

the enemy of God and man; it is he who goes about secretly trying to destroy the good seed. Jesus said: "The enemy that sowed the cockle is the devil."

This is the first part of the parable, and the chief thought in it is this: Weeds will always grow amongst the corn in God's Kingdom —there will always be good and bad Catholics in the Church, and this cannot be avoided, because the devil is always sowing cockle.

(2) *The Growth of the Seed and the Cockle.* What is to be done with the cockle as it grows? Our Lord says nothing about it in the explanation. Why not? Because He had already said in the parable: "Suffer both to grow until the harvest." This was a piece of advice given to the disciples. They would soon see weeds growing up and overrunning the Church—what were they to do? were they to uproot them at once? What might do more harm than good, it is safer to wait until the harvest.

(3) *The Wheat and the Cockle at the Harvest.* When is the harvest time? Jesus says it is at the end of the world. What is to happen then? . . . The Son of Man will come as Judge, with the angels who are the reapers, "and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity." Do you understand our Lord's meaning? The angels are to bring all "the children of the wicked one" to trial, all those who lead others into evil (by scandal) and who themselves lead wicked lives. And what is to be the end of them? They are to be cast like the cockle into the fire, that is to say, into the fire of hell, where they will burn forever and never be consumed. The good will have a very different fate. They will enter heaven with our Lord, and, radiant with the glory of heaven, they will shine for all eternity before their Father's throne. "Then shall the just shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Questions for repetition. What is the meaning of the wheat and cockle in the field? . . . Why does our Lord let the wicked remain among the good? . . . When is the day of retribution? . . . What is to be the lot of the wicked and what of the good? . . .

III. Application.

1. The Gospel contains three chief lessons:

(a) How does evil come into the Church? Not from God, but from the devil. How are evil spirits disposed toward us? . . . Although there are many sinners in the Church, she is nevertheless holy. How do we know that the Church is holy? . . .

(b) Why does God permit evil? In the first place, because man is free and is to remain free; in the second place, because one who is wicked may still repent; in the third place, because the good may become still better, if they bear evil with patience and humility. Does God approve of the wicked things that are done in the world? . . . No, they display His long-suffering. What do we mean by saying that God is long suffering? . . .

(c) What is the end of the wicked? Christ tells us that his end is fire, everlasting ruin. What is hell? . . . Who will be condemned to go to hell? . . . How do we know that hell lasts forever? . . .

2. *What is the significance of to-day's Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* What our Lord foretold in the parable, was soon fulfilled. He sowed the good seed, but His mortal enemy, the devil, oversowed the wheat with cockle. Think of the Pharisees, how they tried to make the people think ill of our Saviour, and many would not believe in Him. It is the same thing at the present time. Jesus sows the good seed of His holy teaching in your hearts, which are then little kingdoms of God. But Satan is never asleep; he is always on the lookout to find an opportunity of secretly sowing cockle, and he

does this by means of wicked people who try to lead you astray, who laugh at your faith and make fun of it, and say perhaps: "You are not bound to believe all that the priests tell you." Or else the devil makes use of bad pictures, books and newspapers, in which foul things are to be found, as if they were not sinful at all. You ought to be on your guard against letting these bad seeds find an entrance into your hearts.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Parables of the Grain of Mustard Seed and of the Leaven

Preparation. Last Sunday we considered the parable of the cockle on the cornfield. To-day we have to think about two more of our Lord's parables, those namely of the grain of mustard seed and of the leaven, which in St. Matthew's Gospel stand immediately after last week's parable. We do not know where they were uttered by our Divine Saviour, perhaps it was near the Lake of Genesareth. Both are instructive and easy to understand.

I. Gospel. Matth. xiii, 31-35.

1. The Grain of Mustard Seed.
2. The Leaven.
3. The Evangelist's Remark.

II. Explanation.

1. *The Grain of Mustard Seed.*

(a) *The Parable.* Mustard seed is the seed of the mustard plant, and you all know that it is very small. Among the Jews it was proverbial on account of its diminutive size; but if you put it on your tongue, you will soon feel how hot and burning it is. When planted in the earth it shoots up quickly and grows to a considerable height. In fertile soil and under the hot rays of the Eastern sun, it sometimes becomes as large as a fig-tree, ten or twelve feet high, with several branches covered with broad leaves. The birds come in great numbers to rest in the cool shade of the leaves and to eat the ripe and pungent seeds. Hence our Saviour says: "It becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof."

(b) *Interpretation.* What lesson did Jesus intend to teach in this parable? . . . "The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed." This is of course the Church, the kingdom of God one earth. Jesus meant to say: "My kingdom the Church is at first small and insignificant as a grain of mustard seed, but just as a great plant grows from the tiny seed in a very short time, so My Church will grow rapidly into a mighty tree. From all countries and nations the heathen will come, like the birds of the air, and dwell together peaceably and happily in the Church." Thus in this parable our Lord wanted to bring before us the development and growth of His Church. Have His Words been fulfilled? The Church was very small at first. On its birthday (when was this?) it numbered only a few thousand Christians; but it soon began to grow and to spread far and wide. The pilgrims, who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, carried home with them the news of what they had seen and heard. The Apostles went as missionaries all over the known world, establishing Christian communities everywhere, so that after about twenty-five years there was no nation belonging to the Roman Empire, where Christianity was unknown, and toward the end of the second century Irenaeus could say: "The Church has spread over the whole world. Just as there is only one sun, so from one end of the world to the other we see the one same Christian truth." In the course of centuries it is true that more than one branch of the tree of the Church decayed and fell away. What do I mean? . . . Think of the so-called Reformation! At that time thousands fell away from the Church, although at the same time she was gaining thousands in America. What do we see now? The three thousand Christians of the first Pentecost have now become nearly three hundred millions, and instead of twelve bishops, as there

were at first, there are nearly twelve hundred. The tiny grain of mustard seed has indeed become a great tree, stretching out its branches over all the countries and peoples of the world. To what does it owe this wonderful growth? To the Holy Ghost, who is always extending the Kingdom of Christ.

Questions for repetition. How does the grain of mustard seed differ from other seeds? . . . Why did our Lord compare His Church with a grain of mustard seed? . . . If we compare the Church as it was at first and as it is now, what do we find? . . .

2. *The Leaven.*

(a) *The Parable.* Let us look at the second parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven." Our Lord is again speaking of the Church, God's kingdom on earth. I suppose you all know what leaven is. It is used in making bread. In the East, as also with us in many homes, women make the bread themselves; there it is a universal custom still at the present time. Do you know how bread is made? The leaven or yeast is mixed with the flour. (In the East they generally took about three bushels of flour for one baking.) Then it begins to "work" and rise, and the leaven gradually penetrates all the flour and gives the dough a pleasant taste. Unleavened bread is insipid and tasteless.

(b) *Interpretation.* Why did our Lord compare His Church with leaven? . . . It is a very beautiful comparison, for just as leaven works its way through the dough and flavors it, so the Church was to embrace all nations and convert them to Christianity, for she possesses divine power. Just as leaven makes bread palatable, the Church was to renew and ennoble all people, so that they might become pleasing to God. Sinful heathen were to become good Christians through the teaching of the Church. Has this really taken place? We need only think of our own fore-

fathers, who were at one time half-savage heathen. Then came the great missionary saints who taught them to live moral and Christian lives. Missionaries still go out to teach heathen nations and bring them the light of Christian truth and grace, for all men are called to belong to God's kingdom on earth and in heaven. In this way "the face of the earth" is to be renewed.

Questions for repetition. What effect has leaven upon flour? . . . Why does this parable apply so well to the Church? . . . How has our Lord's promise been fulfilled? . . .

3. *The Evangelist's Remark.*

The evangelist, after recording these two parables, adds: "All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes, and without parables He did not speak to them." Do you know why our Lord was so fond of using parables? . . . The people in the East delight in them; that was one reason, but the other is that parables make it easier for us to understand the great and heavenly truths that He taught. I act in the same way and always tell you stories when I give you religious instruction, because in this way you find it easier to understand the truths of our holy religion. In one of the Psalms we read: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter propositions from the beginning," or, according to another translation, "I will explain what has been hidden since the creation of the world" (Ps. lxxvii, 2).

III. Application.

(1) We must first consider the likeness and the difference between the two parables of the grain of mustard seed and of the leaven. . . . Both bring before our minds the growth of the Church from small beginnings to its present vast extent. But the parable of the mustard seed refers more to the outward and visible development of the Church in the world; the parable of the leaven

refers more to the internal effect and influence of the Church upon the world.

(2) What truth did our Lord state in the parable of the mustard seed? . . . The mustard seed contains within itself power to become a tree, and actually grows to the size of a tree. In the same way the Church has power in herself to become great, and has actually grown into a mighty tree. The true Church of Christ must be Catholic. Why is Holy Church undoubtedly Catholic? . . . What has made the Church so great and strong both inwardly and outwardly? This has been the work of the Holy Ghost. What were the words in which our Lord promised to send the Holy Ghost to His Church?

(3) What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year? . . . Our Lord foretold that much of the good seed would fall upon barren soil; i. e. that many would not believe. The Apostles might easily have lost courage for this reason, so Christ uttered these two parables to strengthen their confidence. He told them that God's kingdom would extend all over the world. Our hearts are little kingdoms of God, and like the grain of mustard seed they ought to grow and gain strength day by day. Christ's doctrine and grace ought to leaven all our thoughts, words and works, and so transform our whole life and character. This is the chief lesson for us. The work cannot, of course, be done all at once, but gradually, just as the leaven gradually affects the whole of the flour. We must not, however, lose courage, but always begin again with renewed confidence, until we become perfect Christians. Have you at least a firm resolution of amendment? If not, even God's grace can effect nothing; therefore say seriously and with determination: "I *will* become a thoroughly good Christian."

TWENTY-EIGHTH AND LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ppophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the End of the World

Preparation. To-day is the last Sunday in the Church's year, and therefore it is very suitable that the Gospel should contain a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Our Lord foretold these fearful events on the Tuesday in Passion Week. What led to His speaking thus? . . . As He was going out of the Temple, one of His disciples said to Him: "Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" The speaker was amazed at the beauty of the Temple, but Jesus answered: "Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down" (Mark xiii, 1, 2). Then our Lord went out to Mount Olivet and sat down, having before His eyes the wonderful Temple bathed in the golden sunshine. The disciples could not help thinking of what He had said, and some of them asked Him privately: "Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things shall begin to be fulfilled?" i. e. "what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world." Jesus answered that there should be terrible wars, one nation fighting against another, and also pestilences, famines and earthquakes, yet these should be only "the beginnings of sorrows." "Then shall men deliver you up to be afflicted and shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations for My Name's sake. . . . And many false prophets shall arise and shall seduce many . . . And this Gospel of the

kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation (the end of the world) come." Then follows to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel. Matth. xxiv, 15-35.

1. Admonition to the Faithful.
2. Misery at the End of the World.
3. Warning Against False Prophets.
4. Signs Preceding the Last Judgment.
5. Parable of the Fig-tree.
6. Solemn Conclusion.

II. Explanation.

It is not easy to understand the prophecy, so a few words of explanation are necessary. The destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are separated by an immense interval of time in our eyes, but our Lord viewed events differently, for "with the Lord . . . a thousand years are as one day" (II. Peter iii, 8). The whole future was like a great picture unrolled before Him, and His eye surveyed everything at once. Hence He described the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world as if they were to take place at the same time.

1. *Admonition to the Faithful.* The prophet Daniel had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem when he said: "In the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail, and there shall be in the Temple the abomination of desolation, and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and to the end" (Dan. ix, 27). Our Lord referred to these words, when He spoke of the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place." The holy place was the city of Jerusalem and especially the Temple. Then follow various admonitions: "They that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains." Why? Because in the caverns of the mountains

they would be safe from their foes. The Christians obeyed these instructions, and on the approach of the Romans fled to Pella and other places among the mountains. "And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house." The houses in the East have flat roofs, and it is possible to go from one house to another along them, and also to descend without passing through the house. Hence our Lord meant: "Flee, and do not waste a moment. Leave everything behind, if you want to save your lives." "And he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat." Lose everything rather than your lives! Our Saviour grieved over the prospect, especially when He thought of the poor mothers, so He spoke of them too, for with little children it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for them to escape quickly from their enemies. Their flight would be terribly hard if it took place in winter or on the Sabbath. Why? In winter, during the rainy season, the roads in Palestine were very bad and almost impassable, and on the Sabbath the Jews were not allowed to go more than a thousand paces.

All that our Lord said up to this point applies particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem, and only incidentally to the dreadful events that will occur at the end of the world. What follows, however, refers more especially to the end of the world. Our Saviour surveyed the two events at the same time, so He went on to speak of

2. *The Misery to Come at the End of the World.* "There shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be." These words refer to the end of the world; at the destruction of Jerusalem many fearful cruelties were perpetrated, and there was great misery, but still worse things took place later. Think of the great persecutions of the

Christians, and the awful wars! "And unless these days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved." Temptations against faith will be so great that all risk losing their souls, but because God is merciful, the days of this general corruption will be shortened, "for the sake of the elect." There will be few saints at that time, but they are not to perish.

3. *Our Lord's Warning Against False Prophets.* "If any man shall say to you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there,' do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets." Since our Lord's time about twenty people have professed to be the Messias, and each time the Jews have been deceived. Another false prophet is still to come, and with the devil's help will work apparent miracles—this is Antichrist. How is this possible? . . . Again our Lord warns us: "If therefore they shall say to you." . . . Christ is the true Messias, and all others are miserable liars and deceivers. Be not led astray; the Son of Man will come at last, and be visible to all: "For as lightning cometh out of the East, and appeareth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Our Lord ends the first part of the prophecy with the words: "Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together." This is a strange saying, applicable both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the end of the world. Through its sins Jerusalem had become in God's sight a foul corpse, and, therefore, the Roman eagles (the Roman banner was an eagle) would occupy the city. In the same way the Son of Man will one day come to judge corrupt humanity. This thought leads our Saviour on to speak of the Last Judgment.

4. *Signs Preceding the Last Judgment.* A great change is to take place in the heavens: "The sun shall be darkened" (Cf. the Gospel for the first Sunday in Advent), and this extraordinary fact will

portend the coming of the Judge. . . . Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven—an immense glowing Cross. The Cross was the sign of Christ's humiliation, and therefore it will be the sign also of His glory. . . . "and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn"—the tribes, namely, of the wicked, who will fear and quake at the sight of the Cross, but it will be too late. Then Christ will come on the clouds of heaven, that is to say, surrounded by clouds of light and by all the heavenly host. "And He will send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice." . . . How loud will be the blast of that trumpet, which is to awaken all the dead and summon them to arise from their graves and come to Judgment! Then will all the dead arise, and the angels will bring them together from every part of the world. Our Lord says nothing more about the Judgment, because the disciples asked only what signs should precede it.

5. *Parable of the Fig-tree.* Our Saviour concluded His magnificent but awful prophecy with a charming parable. It was at the beginning of April, and in the Holy Land summer had already set in and the fig-trees were growing green. Jesus was probably sitting under a fig-tree, and so He took it as the subject of His parable: "And from the fig-tree learn a parable. . . . when the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. In the same way, when you see all the things foretold, regard them as a sign that the end of the world is at hand."

6. *Solemn Conclusion.* Our Lord ended the whole prophecy with the solemn assurance: "Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done." If we think of the destruction of Jerusalem, we know that many of the Jews, who lived at the same time as our Lord, witnessed it. If we think of the end of the world, our Lord was referring to the whole human

race. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Will the world pass away? . . . All that Christ foretold will certainly be fulfilled. All that He said about Jerusalem proved true, and all that He said about the end of the world will prove no less true.

Questions for repetition. When and where did our Lord utter this great prophecy? . . . How may we account for the fact that in the prophecy the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are apparently confused? . . . What admonitions did our Lord address to the faithful? . . . Why will God shorten the time of tribulation at the end of the world? . . . Why did our Saviour warn men especially against false prophets? . . . What signs will fill the wicked with terror? . . . What orders will the Judge give to His angels? . . . How does the parable of the fig-tree apply to the end of the world? . . . With what wonderful statement did our Lord end His prophecy? . . .

III. Application.

1. *Points for instruction.* (a) We see again in this Gospel a fundamental truth of our holy religion,—Christ is truly God, for He knows everything. . . . (b) He proclaims to us the certainty of the Last Judgment, a truth as consoling for the good as it is terrifying to the wicked. We are reminded of it whenever we say the creed. What is the meaning of the words: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead?" . . . For what shall we be judged? . . . What will be the Judge's final sentence? . . .

2. *Why does the Church order this Gospel to be read to-day?* Of course, because at the end of the Church's year we ought to think seriously of the end of all things. The end of the world is the beginning of eternity, and the day of judgment is the great

harvest day, when we shall be sentenced to everlasting life or everlasting death, to happiness or to misery forever. The kingdom of God on earth will then change unto His kingdom in heaven. Hence our chief thought to-day should be the coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

3. *When will the end of the world take place?* "Of that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven" (Matth. xxiv, 36). Therefore we ought always to be ready for it. Suppose the end of the world had come, and the sign of the Cross appeared in the sky, and Christ were coming on the clouds of heaven, bright as the sun, and the angels were summoning us all to judgment; would you be glad, or would you be forced to fear? Live so as to be able to die in peace any day, and be ready for the angel's call. As a man lives, so he dies; and as he dies, so he will be for ever, either joyful in heaven or suffering in hell—in one place or the other for all eternity.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Prophecy of the End of the World

Preparation. At the close of the ecclesiastical year we heard of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world; and as soon as the new year begins we are reminded again of the latter. Last Sunday we read St. Matthew's account of our Lord's prophecy, to-day we read St. Luke's. There are great resemblances between them, but they are not exactly alike. Last Sunday we heard only of the horrors of the approaching judgment, to-day we think also of the joy awaiting us. Last Sunday we considered the punishment inflicted by God upon Jerusalem, but to-day there is no mention of it. The former Gospel was a picture of horrors, but in this there is more light. What events led up to the utterance of this prophecy? You know all about it. . . . Where did our Lord utter it?

I. Gospel. Luke xxi, 25-33.

1. Signs of the Approach of the Judgment.
2. Coming of the Judge.
3. Advice to the Righteous.
4. Parable of the Fig-tree. Conclusion.

II. Explanation.

1. *Signs of the Approach of the Judgment.* "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars." What kind of signs? . . . St. Matthew tells us more about them; he says: "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

and the stars shall fall from heaven" (Matth. xxiv, 29). What does this mean? . . . Christ, our Judge, is at hand, and will come with great power and glory. At His approach all the universe will be shaken, and all the heavenly bodies will be affected. The sun will cease to shine, and, therefore, the moon too will give no light, and a great darkness will prevail all over the world just as it did before God said: "Let there be light." "The stars shall fall from heaven." Where will they fall? Down to our earth? No, they will be hurled out of their usual courses and wander about in space. The disorganization of the heavenly bodies will have its effect also upon earth. The sea will be disturbed from its lowest depths, the waters will rage and dash furiously against the shore, and all men will be overwhelmed with terror. "There shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves." The sea looks dreadful now when a storm breaks over it, and the waves rise, the lightning flashes from heaven and the thunder rolls. Still more dreadful is it in the darkness of night; but all this will be intensified at the end of the world. Then we shall hear a strange rumbling in the earth, and everything will give way under our feet, whilst all around is impenetrable darkness. No wonder that our Lord speaks of "men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world." Many will actually die of fear; but what will be the cause of all this disturbance? . . . God will withdraw His Almighty Hand from the world, and "the powers of heaven shall be moved," and the whole universe thrown into confusion.

These are only the signs preceding the actual Judgment, and they will be followed by

2. *The Coming of the Judge.* "Then they shall see the Son of

Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty." The Son of Man is Jesus Christ, Who called Himself by this name. He came once from heaven as a poor, feeble infant, but it will be otherwise at His second coming. At His Ascension the angels foretold the manner of it: "This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven" (Acts i, 11). He ascended into heaven glorious and brilliant as the sun, and He will return thence in all the splendor of His Divinity. Shining clouds covered Him as a garment, hiding Him from the gaze of His followers, and He will appear again seated on clouds as upon a throne, and surrounded by all the choirs of angels. "Thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. Then will follow the third act of the solemn drama, but Jesus tells us nothing more. What may be the reason of His silence? It was perhaps that the disciples asked no further questions, and on another occasion He had given a detailed prophecy about it. The disciples may well have been alarmed by the utterance of their Divine Master, so He added, in order to console them, a few words of

3. *Advice to the Righteous.* "When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your Redemption is at hand." What does this mean? . . . Our Lord was speaking only to the good, not to the bad. When the wicked see all these things taking place, they will be beside themselves with terror and will not dare to look up. Do you know why? . . . The Cross, the sign of the Son of Man, will suddenly appear in heaven, and will fill them with alarm, because they have despised it. Then Christ will come as Judge, and they must tremble before Him, for He will pronounce the terrible sentence: "Depart from Me." But it will not be so with the righteous, although they too will feel

anxiety, but they will soon recover their peace of mind. They have loved Jesus in life and need not fear Him at death. They have always kept the Cross in view, and now it is like a bright ray of hope shedding light on their way. They can look up calmly and confidently, for they know that the destruction of the world will bring them release from it; the sorrows of earth are over and the joys of heaven are close at hand.

4. *Parable of the Fig-tree.* Our Lord told them the parable beginning: "See the fig-tree and all the trees." . . . Why did He utter a parable here? . . . It teaches two things. When the trees put forth leaves and flowers, that is a sign that summer is near. Why did Jesus not mention spring? Because in the Holy Land there are only two seasons, the rainy season and summer. And when all these things happen, it is a sign that the Last Judgment is near. This is the first lesson contained in the parable. What is the second? Just as, when the cold, cheerless winter is over, we rejoice at seeing the trees put forth leaves and blossoms, so the righteous ought to welcome these signs of the judgment, for they will then be admitted to God's Kingdom. The parable thus explains the words of comfort addressed to the just.

Our Lord concludes with the solemn words: "Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away." The first sentence is obscure and mysterious. Our Lord may be referring to the Jews. He is certainly warning us to be ready for the Day of Judgment, as we cannot know when it will come. It may take us by surprise like a thunderstorm. Heaven and earth shall pass away: is this true? . . . Yes, they will exist no more as they now are, but a new world will arise on the ruins of the old. Everything is liable to change with one exception

—God's Word can never change, therefore, this prediction of the end of the world must always hold good.

Questions for repetition. What signs in heaven and on earth are to precede the Last Judgment? . . . What effect will all these signs have upon mankind? . . . What difference is there between Christ's first and second coming? . . . What words of comfort did He address to the righteous? . . . Why may the just look forward calmly to the Day of Judgment? . . . What has the parable of the fig-tree to do with the terrors of the Judgment to come? . . .

III. Application.

1. Our Gospel contains several important lessons. Which article of the creed refers to the Judgment? . . . What is the meaning of the words: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead?" . . . What do we call the Judgment at the end of the world? . . . For what will men be judged? . . . What will be the sentence given by the Judge? . . . What will God do after the General Judgment? . . . Why will there be a General Judgment?

2. Now you can easily answer the questions: Why at the beginning of the Church's year do we have a Gospel all about the end of the world? . . . The thought of the Judgment ought to awaken in us the spirit of penance, and Advent is a time of penance. The thought of the Judgment ought, however, to remain with us all through the year, causing us to walk in the fear of God. We too should be able to say with St. Jerome: "I always seem to hear the sound of the trumpet, and a voice crying: 'Jerome, come to Judgment.'" Many fancy that the Judgment Day is still very far off. Is this true? The day when we die will be for each individual the day of his Judgment. What should we think

if death were to come to-day? Christ, our Judge, is always present in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Supposing He suddenly appeared from the tabernacle, would you be able to say calmly: "Lord, I am ready?" Or would you tremble with fear? If you dread His coming, do penance, and prepare to make a good confession in Advent. Then the Infant Jesus will be born again in your hearts at your Christmas Communion.

The chief lesson taught us on the first Sunday in Advent is to make ready for Christ's coming to judge the world.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

St. John's Disciples Come to Christ

Introduction.—The event recorded in this Gospel took place in the second year of our Lord's public life. St. John was in prison in the fortress of Machærus, near the Dead Sea. Why was he in prison? . . . Herod was living with his stepbrother's wife, and this was a great sin and a scandal to everybody, so St. John, who was preaching penance, went boldly to the royal sinner and told him: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." This caused St. John to fall into disfavor; but, though in prison, he was not completely shut off from the world, and his disciples were able to go and visit him. They told their master about the wonderful things that Jesus had done in the towns and villages of Galilee, and this determined St. John to bear witness once more to Christ, for he knew that his own days were numbered. Accordingly he sent two of his disciples to our Lord. To-day's Gospel contains the account of their coming to Him.

I. Gospel: Matth. xi, 2-10.

1. St. John's disciples make inquiries about the Messias.
2. Our Lord refers them to His Works.
3. Our Lord praises St. John.

II. Explanation: 1. *St. John's disciples make inquiries about the Messias.*—The disciples came to our Lord just at a time when many people were assembled and He was working great miracles. [St. Luke says (vii, 21): "In that same hour He cured many of their diseases, and hurts, and evil spirits, and to many that were blind

He gave sight."] They declared themselves to have been sent by John the Baptist to ask Christ: *"Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?"* What a strange question! What strikes you particularly about it? . . . Did not St. John believe that our Lord was the Messias? Of course he believed it; there can be no doubt on the subject. How can you prove it? . . . At our Lord's baptism St. John said, very humbly: "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" He saw the heavens open and the Holy Ghost descending, whilst a voice from heaven said: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matth. iii, 14-17). If St. John had not been strong in faith, our Lord would certainly not have spoken of him as He did. Why then was this strange question asked? . . . John asked it for his disciples' sake, not for his own; they were still doubtful about Christ, and so St. John wanted them to hear from our Lord's own lips who He was. The question was asked for the sake also of the people. St. John had done his best to bring them all to Christ, but most were indifferent and cared nothing for Him, and so St. John was full of a holy desire to make all Israel believe in the Messias.

2. *Our Lord refers the disciples to His works.*—What did Christ say in answer to the question? . . . He did not give any definite reply, nor did he He say: "Yes, I am the Messias," but: *"Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen."* In these words He referred plainly to the prophet Isaias (xxxv, 5). This was the best answer to the question, for actions speak louder than words. What did our Lord mean? . . . "You have seen with your own eyes and heard what works I perform. My miracles prove who I am; you cannot shut your eyes to them." On another occasion Jesus said to the Jews: "Though you will not believe me, believe the works" (John x, 37). In fact, any one who fails

to recognize Christ from what He had done, must be totally blind and beyond the reach of all help.

Our Lord added: *"Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me."* What did He mean? . . . Most of the Jews were always expecting the coming of a Messias, who should be a great king and conqueror, and after expelling the Romans from the country and delivering the Jews from servitude, should establish a new empire. This was the sort of Messias that the Jews wanted, and instead of him came Christ, poor and humble Himself, and preaching a Gospel of poverty and humility. He did indeed found an empire, but it was a spiritual one, and the Jews would not accept Him as the Messias. They were bitterly disappointed and scandalized at Him. St. John's disciples, too, seem not to have been altogether free from these false hopes regarding the Messias. Now do you understand our Lord's meaning? His words contain a sharp reproof to the disciples and still more to the people. Those alone will be saved who cling to our Saviour; and no one who is scandalized at Him can find salvation.

3. *Our Lord praises St. John.*—The disciples went away, after receiving their answer. What impression do you think their question made upon the people? . . . Many of them may have asked themselves whether St. John really doubted Christ. They wondered whether he was wavering now, when his life was in danger. So our Lord instructed them on this point, and spoke in praise of St. John, whilst at the same time His words contained a serious rebuke to the people. He asked them three questions.

First Question.—*"What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"* Our Saviour was reminding His hearers of the time when St. John began to preach, and they had followed him in crowds into the desert. What had they gone to

see? A man, weak as a reed? No, he was not a weakling, ready to bend at every breath of wind; he was a true man, strong and unyielding; he feared no one, and did not shrink from telling the truth plainly to people in high positions. There was a reproof here for the multitude. Our Lord implied that they were like reeds; they had listened to St. John and had believed, but soon they had shown their weakness by returning to their evil ways.

Second Question: *"But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings."* St. John was not effeminate, but a man of penance, and everything about him suggested penance. These words contained another reproof. The people had seen and heard the great preacher of penance, and had been inspired by his words to enter upon a life of penance themselves; but they had soon given it up, and had relapsed into their former love of comfort and self-indulgence.

Third Question: *"But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet."*—Why was St. John more than a prophet? . . . The other prophets were allowed to see the Messias only in a dim distance, but St. John could point to Him and say: "Behold, the Lamb of God." The other prophets preached penance, but St. John administered the baptism of penance. The other prophets announced the coming of the Messias, but St. John was actually His precursor, for it was of him that the prophet Malacrias had said: *"Behold I send my angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee."* There is one more point to notice: St. John had baptized our Lord and shown Him to the world as the Messias.

Christ's third question conveys another rebuke to the people. . . . He seems to say: "You saw him, the greatest of all the

prophets, and heard him preaching penance. You were even baptized by him, and what is the result of it all? You believed, but your faith had no permanence; you were converted, but your conversion did not last." Thus all that our Lord said in praise of St. John was a reproof to the people and marked at the same time the close of the Baptist's career. He had done his work, and the time had come for him to die. When the sun rises the moon ceases to shine; Christ was the bright sun, shining in the heavens, and St. John's light had to vanish.

Questions for Repetition.—What question did St. John's disciples ask our Lord? . . . Why did St. John send his disciples to Christ? . . . What answer did Christ give them? . . . In what words did Christ rebuke those who doubted? . . . What are the three things that Christ said in praise of St. John? . . . How was the praise of St. John a rebuke to the people? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—St. John's disciples asked: "Art thou the Messias?" and our Lord answered that His works would tell them. The prophets had already foretold His miracles. Isaias writes: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (xxxv, 5, 6). Christ fulfilled all the prophecies, therefore He was the Messias. What had the prophets foretold about the Redeemer? . . . What did they call the promised Saviour? . . . How do we know that Christ was the Son of God, and really God? . . . What evidence or testimony is there for Christ? . . .

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical* year? What does the Church wish us to learn from it? . . . We hear first that Christ was the Messias; we all believe that,

and we know that what He did long ago, He will do again for us in the Sacrament of Penance. He will cure the blindness and lameness and deafness of our souls; He will cleanse the lepers and raise the dead to life. This is why we come to Jesus, and why He will come to us at Christmas. The Church teaches us that we ought to have a holy desire and longing for him; that we ought to pray: "Come, Lord Jesus, come to us." She teaches us also to take St. John as our example, to look at him and see whether we are like him, or whether we are weaklings, always ready to fall back at once into our old, sinful ways. Are we so weak as to shrink from every kind of sacrifice, and therefore to make no progress on the road to heaven? Far be it from us to behave like this. Let us bravely tread the path of penance. What have you done hitherto for love of Christ? What will you resolve to do henceforth for His sake?

The chief thought that we may carry away from the Second Sunday in Advent is: Christ is coming as our Saviour! Let us go to meet Him.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

St. John the Baptist and the Pharisees

Introduction.—To-day's Gospel contains the account of an interesting and instructive event, that took place at Bethania, beyond the Jordan, just before our Lord entered upon His public ministry. St. John the Baptist was then held in great honor by the people, many of whom believed him to be the Messias, and the number of his followers was increasing daily. His enemies, the Pharisees, were consequently filled with rage and jealousy; they wanted to prevent the people from following him, and they never could forgive him for having hurled at them the stern reproof: "Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matth. iii, 7). But what could they do? The Sanhedrim held a meeting, and then sent some priests and Levites as messengers to St. John.

I. Gospel. John i, 19-28.

1. Questions addressed to St. John.

2. St. John's testimony to Christ.

II. Explanation.

1. *Questions addressed to St. John.*—What did the messengers want of St. John? It was quite clear that they did not come with any good intention. We can see that St. John was aware of this, and that was why he gave them such short, sharp answers. There can be no doubt that the Sanhedrim had arranged beforehand what questions they were to ask him.

(a) The first question was: *"Who art Thou?"* Surely this was a strange thing to ask, for they must have known him. St.

John was not a stranger; everyone knew him; but these men wanted to find out; so he said: I am not the Christ. They thought he might, after all, really be the Messias, or they wondered whether he was pretending to be the Messias. They did not ask him straightforwardly: "Art thou the Messias?" but only: "Who art thou?" *"He confessed and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ."* St. John had understood exactly what they wanted to find out; so he said: I am not the Christ. Why did the evangelist use so many words? Because he wished to show that the Baptist's statement was very important and definite.

(b) The second question was: *"What then? Art thou Elias?"* What should make them think that he was Elias, who had lived centuries ago? . . . Because there is a prophecy in the book of Malachias (iv, 5): "Behold, I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Hence the people believed that Elias would come back to be the forerunner of the Messias. In fact, Christ had Himself, on one occasion, spoken of St. John as Elias: "Elias indeed shall come . . . but I say to you that Elias is already come." Immediately after these words, we read that the disciples understood that our Lord had spoken to them of St. John the Baptist (Matth. xvii, 11-13). You remember, too, how an angel announced to Zacharias the birth of St. John, and said: "He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke i, 17). The messengers might therefore reasonably ask: "Art thou Elias?" But St. John's reply was short and decisive: *"I am not."* Who was right? . . . St. John had the dignity and office of Elias, but he was a distinct person.

c) The third question was: *"Art thou the prophet?"* What prophet did they mean? There can be no doubt that they were

thinking of the great prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy (xviii, 15): "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me; him thou shalt hear." The Jews were not agreed as to whether this prophet was to be the Messias himself or a herald sent to announce his coming. What did St. John answer? He said emphatically, "No." He was certainly *a* prophet, but he was not *the* prophet promised by Moses, for that was Christ, the Messias. The messengers were naturally dissatisfied with this reply, for they had gained no information at all from St. John, so they went on to ask him more questions.

(d) The fourth question. *"Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayeth thou of thyself?"* This time St. John answered them plainly: *"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias."* How full of humility and dignity was this reply. St. John knew himself to be more than a prophet; he knew that Isaias had prophesied about him, but he did not boast. He did not say that he was the forerunner of the Messias, nor that he was an angel or messenger sent by God; no, with all humility and modesty he described himself as the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Now comes a short remark: *"And they that were sent were of the Pharisees."* The evangelist had a reason for writing these words, for they draw attention to the wickedness of the Pharisees, who, without troubling about St. John's answer, behaved as if they had heard nothing, and asked:

(e) The last question: *"Why then dost thou baptise, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet?"* This is a severe reproof, as well as a question, for it implies: "If you are not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet, who gave you authority to preach pen-

ance and to baptize?" Why was this a very Pharasaical accusation? St. John had just proved that he was sent by God, but they paid no attention, and purposely turned a deaf ear to what he said. He was not bound to give them any further answer, yet he did so, and it is a glorious testimony to Christ.

2. *St. John's testimony to Christ.—"I baptize with water, but there hath stood One in the midst of you, Whom you know not."* He meant: "I have a right to baptize, for I have authority from above. Which of you can question my right? But I baptize only with water, and my baptism is merely a type of and preparation for the baptism that the Messias will institute. He is here now, but you do not know Him; if you knew Him, you would not ask me why I baptize."

At that moment St. John was overpowered by the Holy Spirit, and with deep reverence he bore testimony, saying: *"The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me; the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."* Of whom was the Baptist speaking? . . . Of the Messias. But how could he say that the Messias would come after him and yet was before him? The Messias was the Eternal Son of God, and St. John was penetrated with faith in Christ's Divinity. Hence he said with reverence: "I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoe." In the East people wear sandals, secured by a strap or latchet, and it was the business of a slave to put on and take off his master's sandals. St. John, although great among all the children of men, considered himself unworthy to perform even the humblest service for the Messias.

The conversation was over. The Pharisees had wanted to entrap St. John in his words, or at least to frighten him, and prevent him in future from preaching penance and baptizing. Did they

succeed? . . . No, they accomplished something quite different, and gave him an opportunity of bearing a magnificent testimony to Christ.

Questions for repetition.—The Pharisees asked St. John five questions. What were the first three questions, and how did St. John answer them? . . . What did the Baptist say about himself? . . . How did the Pharisees show their malice. . . . What reproof was contained in the last question addressed to St. John? . . . How did the Baptist bear testimony to Christ's Divinity and to His being the Messias? . . .

III. Application. 1. *What likeness is there between last Sunday's Gospel and to-day's?* . . . Both contain a question about the Messias. St. John's disciples asked our Saviour: "Art thou He that art to come, or look we for another?" And the Pharisees asked St. John: "Who art thou?" In the one case the question was asked with a good intention, in the other with a bad one. One question was addressed to the real Messias, the other to one who was suspected of being the Messias. St. John's disciples asked, and found the Saviour; the Pharisees asked and found Him not, for their eyes were darkened and their hearts hardened.

2. *What doctrines does to-day's Gospel contain?*

(a) St. John confessed the Divinity of Christ. What is the meaning of the words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord?" . . . "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary?" . . . What do we believe about Jesus Christ? . . .

(b) What was St. John's special virtue? . . . What is humility? . . . How do we sin by pride? . . . Why is pride a mortal sin? . . .

3. *Is this Gospel particularly suitable for Advent?* . . . Advent is a time of penance, but true penance is impossible without humility. It is only if we are humble that we shall really see our sins, be truly sorry for them and confess them honestly. It is only if we are humble that the Infant Jesus will come to us at Christmas with all the graces that He can give us. This is why the Church points to St. John the Baptist, who was a model of humility. We ought to be humble, as he was, especially when we go to Holy Communion; then we should say most earnestly: "Jesus, my God, I am not worthy to loosen the latchet of Thy shoe, and yet Thou comest to me!"

Our chief thought on the third Sunday in Advent should be: "Christ, the Messias, has come; open to Him your hearts."

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

St. John Preaches Penance

Introduction.—Christmas is close at hand; in a few days we shall be keeping that happy festival. We might expect that the Gospel on the last Sunday in Advent would contain some reference to the approaching joy of Christmas; but such is not the case, and we hear instead more about St. John. We are carried in spirit to the country near the Jordan. What do you know about St. John? . . . When he was still a child everybody was talking about him. Who were his parents? . . . What wonderful thing happened when he was born? . . . People even then began to say: "What will this child grow up to be?" What had he become? . . . When he was quite young he left his home and parents and went away into the wilderness, where he led a strict and holy life of penance, living alone in the wild country near the Jordan and the Dead Sea. What clothes did he wear? . . . What did he eat? . . . His whole appearance commanded respect and suggested penance. The Messias was at hand, and the Spirit of God came to St. John, bidding him go and preach penance to the people.

I. Gospel: Luke iii, 1-6.
1. The call of John the Baptist.
2. The mission of John the Baptist.
II. Explanation.

1. *The call of John the Baptist.*—As a rule each Gospel begins with the words: "At that time," but this one begins with a definite statement of time: *"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius*

Caesar." . . . This sounds like an important statement from some old document. Was St. John really so important? . . . Yes, for his public appearance marks the beginning of the kingdom of God upon earth. He was the great messenger who went before the Messias and introduced Him to the world and to His work of redemption. St. John was really a very great man, and that is why our Lord said to him: "There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist" (Matth. xi, 11).

Let us look more closely at the introductory statement of time. Who are the people mentioned in it? . . . The first is the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Why is he named first? Judea belonged at that time to the vast empire governed by Rome, and Tiberius had been reigning since the year 11 A. D. Therefore St. John received his call in 26 A. D. How long was that before Christ began His public ministry? . . . Next to Tiberius, Pontius Pilate is mentioned; he was the Roman governor of Judea. Then we hear of three tetrarchs, Herod, Philip and Lysanias. They were princes who ruled the rest of Judea. Finally come two familiar names, Annas and Caiphas, borne by high-priests. But is it not strange that there should be two high-priests? . . . Caiphas was really the high-priest at that time, but Annas had held the office before him, and retained the title. He was a shrewd, energetic man, and was highly esteemed by the people; moreover, he was the father-in-law of Caiphas.

The names at the beginning of the Gospel are therefore those of the temporal and spiritual rulers of the period; and they show us at once to what a depth the chosen people had already sunk. Tiberius was indeed a scourge sent by God; the terror of his subjects, and a man of the foulest character, yet, bad as he was, he ruled the empire and was supreme over God's people of Israel.

The sceptre had really been taken from Juda, as the patriarch Jacob had foretold on his death bed (Gen. xlix, 10). Pilate was a tyrant, not much better than the emperor, and had the Jews completely in his power. Caiphas, the high-priest, was a weak man, a coward, ready to flatter the Romans in the most abject manner; moreover, he was, like Annas, a freethinker and a bitter foe to the Messias. Yet he was the spiritual ruler of God's people. In very truth, their cup of misery was full, and all were longing for a Saviour; "the fullness of time" had come.

"The Word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert." The desert had become a second home to him, and he loved it; but now he heard God's voice, and humbly, like an obedient child, he obeyed the call. "It is God's will," this was his thought, and so he left the desert, and, overcoming his dislike of being with other people, he began his work of proclaiming the coming of the Messias.

2. *The mission of John the Baptist.—"And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the Baptism of Penance for the remission of sins."* The Jordan winds like a snake through the desert, and both its banks are covered with green meadows as far as the Dead Sea. Thither had the prophet Elias come long before, and he was carried thence in a chariot of fire up to heaven. Now the second Elias went to the same place and began to preach, and soon everyone was talking about him and saying that there was a new prophet in their midst. In a short time crowds of people went down to the Jordan, in order to see and hear him. What did St. John preach? He called upon all to receive the Baptism of Penance, *i. e.*, to do penance and to be baptized. Other prophets had preached penance, but St. John added baptism, which was something new. This baptism was a sign of desiring to lead a

new life, a life of penance and thus of making ready for the Messias. But St. John's baptism is called "the Baptism of Penance for the remission of sins." Had it really power to obtain remission of sins? No; only Christian Baptism can do this. St. John's baptism could only make men's hearts ready for the remission that the Messias would give.

The prophet Isaias had foretold St. John's mission, and that is why we read: *"As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."* These words sum up the whole of the Baptist's teaching. Men must do penance, for their Redeemer was at hand. These two main thoughts are then amplified, and the prophet uses the simile of a king entering a city. A herald goes before, calling to the people: "Make ready, the king is coming." Thus did St. John precede our Lord, telling every one: "The Messias is coming; prepare the way of the Lord." How was the way to be prepared? *"Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low."* Of course we must not take this literally, but figuratively. What do the words mean? . . . Everything must be removed that separates us from God; all our sins, our evil inclinations, our vices and our passions. These are valleys that must be filled up by earnest, zealous penance. What are the mountains and hills? . . . Everything that tends to puff men up with pride; arrogance, presumption, obstinacy. These mountains and hills must be brought low by cultivating true humility. *"The crooked shall be made straight."* Many people follow crooked paths; they are liars, hypocrites, dishonorable and deceitful as serpents. They must abandon all their evil ways, for the Messias desires straightforwardness, and a childlike and simple disposition.

"And the rough ways plain." What makes a road rough? Stones, which either are loose or project from the earth. They are very apt to make one stumble and fall. In our lives there are many rough places, many troubles and sorrows; and sometimes we stumble and fall over them. These rough places must be smoothed by patience and courageous endurance. The preacher of penance demands a great deal; he cries: "Away with sin! away with pride! away with all deceitfulness! away with all cowardice!" But he also promises a great deal: *"All flesh shall see the salvation of God."* . . . *i. e.*, you will see your Saviour, and through Him obtain eternal salvation.

Questions for repetition.—At what date was St. John called? . . . Why was the evangelist so careful to fix the exact time when he began his ministry? . . . Where did St. John preach? . . . What is the meaning of "the Baptism of Penance?" . . . What did St. John's baptism signify? . . . How did the prophet Isaias describe the coming of the Messias? . . . How ought we to prepare to receive our Saviour? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—The Advent messenger tells us to prepare the way of the Lord. This applies particularly to Holy Communion. Before it we must fill up the valleys by means of a good Confession. How can we prepare our souls for Holy Communion? . . . What sin is committed by a person who communicates unworthily? . . . What does St. Paul say about an unworthy Communion? . . . Do venial sins make us unworthy to receive Holy Communion? . . . We must also bring low all the mountains and hills, and come to Jesus with humility; therefore before Communion let us say with the priest: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof."

2. Now let us go back again to the beginning. Why does not

the Church to-day announce to us the coming joy of Christmas? . . . Why does she again remind us of penance? . . . She knows her children well, and is a careful mother. She is afraid that some of them may have hitherto not listened to her motherly summons to do penance; she wants them even now to do what they can, and to begin to-day to prepare their hearts for the Infant Jesus, by prayer, Confession and penance. Are any of you careless children? Make haste to do at the eleventh hour what you have neglected. What can you still do? . . . You can go to holy Mass every day, you can visit Jesus in the crib, or give something to a poor child, or practise a little self-denial. If the Infant Jesus is to make you happy at Christmas, you must do something to please Him, too.

The chief thought on the fourth Sunday in Advent is penance—the way to Christ.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Simeon and Anna

Introduction.—On Christmas night the Infant Jesus came into this world. Where was He born? . . . Who were the first who came to adore Him? . . . How did the shepherds and the Wise Men learn of the birth of Christ? . . . In the Gospel for to-day and in those of the next two Sundays we read something about our Saviour's childhood. What took place forty days after His birth? . . . According to the Jewish law every mother was considered unclean for seven days, and at the end of forty days she had to carry an offering to the Temple—a lamb and a dove, or, if she were poor, a pair of turtle doves, and then she was clean again. Moreover, the law required that every first-born son should be dedicated to the service of God. Afterwards, however, only members of the tribe of Levi were set apart to serve in the Temple, but every first-born son had to be presented to the Lord, and then released from service at the altar by the payment of five shekels (about three dollars).

Our Lady was not, strictly speaking, bound by the law, for she was never unclean, but was always the holy, immaculate Virgin Mother of God. Still less was Jesus subject to the law; He is all-holy, and therefore altogether dedicated to God. Yet both Jesus and Mary humbly submitted to the law, in order to set us all an example; we must respect God's commandments. So Our Lady and St. Joseph brought the Divine Child to the Temple at Jerusalem. What wonderful thing happened there? . . . The venerable

old man, Simeon, took the Child into his arms, and, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, he praised God, saying: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." To-day's Gospel begins just at this point.

I. GOSPEL: Luke ii, 33-40.

1. Simeon prophesies regarding Christ.
2. Anna the prophetess praises the Lord.
3. The Holy Family goes to Nazareth.

II. EXPLANATION. 1. *Simeon's prophecy.*—The Gospel begins with the words: *"And His father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him."* How could they wonder? Did they not understand anything about the dignity of the Divine Child? Did they not know why Jesus had come into the world? . . . Yes, they knew all this, but they were astonished that Simeon knew it, too, and could foretell such great things about the Child. Who had revealed these mysteries to Simeon? . . . The Holy Ghost. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, Simeon saw before him our Lord's whole life and suffering, and so he began to prophesy: *"Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel."* How was this fulfilled? . . . Many in Israel refused to have anything to do with our Lord, and so they fell deeper and deeper into sin and misery, until at last they reached the abyss of eternal destruction. Others believed in Christ, and rose up out of their sins and found the way to everlasting life. Simeon continued: *"And for a sign which shall be contradicted."* Was this true? . . . Yes, our Lord was always contradicted, *i. e.,* spoken against. His life was per-

fectly pure and holy, but what did the Pharisees say of Him? They called Him a sinner, a blasphemer, a Sabbath breaker. He went about doing good, but the Pharisees accused Him of stirring up the people to revolt. They saw His miracles, and declared them to be tricks of the devil and no true miracles at all. "By Beelzebub he drives out devils" was what they said. Their opposition and hatred went on increasing in intensity, until at last they succeeded in crucifying our Lord. He was indeed a sign of contradiction to the end.

Our Lady saw all this, and the opposition offered to her Divine Son made her suffer, too. When did she feel the greatest sorrow? . . . When she stood by the Cross; then indeed was Simeon's prophecy fulfilled: *"And thine own soul a sword shall pierce."* How does Christian art represent the Mother of Sorrows? . . . When our Lord died on the Cross, *"the thoughts of many hearts were revealed."* How was this done? In their unbelief most people mocked at Christ, saying: "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross." Only a few believed, and said, like the Roman centurion: "This was indeed the Son of God." As it was then, so it is now, and so it will always be. Some cry: "Away with Christ!" Others protest that they will always be loyal to Him. The former are His enemies, the latter His friends.

2. *Anna, the prophetess.*—There was another highly favored soul in the Temple, Anna, the prophetess. What are we told of her life? . . . She had been pure and good when she was a girl; for seven years she had been a faithful wife to her husband, and at his death she did not want to divide her affections any longer between earth and heaven, but her whole life thenceforth was to be devoted to God's service. She became one of the women who worked and took care of things in the Temple, and then she was

happy, for she was engaged in a holy occupation. Only one thing distressed her: she longed to see the Messias, the Saviour of Israel. She had been working in the Temple for nearly sixty years, and now at last the desire of her heart was to be granted. Prompted by the Holy Ghost she was just coming back to the Temple when she caught sight of the Divine Child. At that moment a ray of light seemed to fall into her soul; she felt young and vigorous, and her face was radiant with joy. She recognized the Child as the Messias, and greeted Him with enthusiasm as the Saviour of Israel. She spoke of Him to everybody. How did the venerable old woman show her gratitude that her prayer was granted? . . . She wanted others to share her happiness, and so she proclaimed to everybody that the Messias had come. She desired to bring all to Him, that in Him they might find salvation.

3. *Return of the Holy Family.*—They had complied with the law and consecrated the Divine Child to God, and on that occasion the glory of Christ had been revealed for the first time to the people of Israel. Now they started homewards; where did they go? . . . They did not go back to Bethlehem, but *"they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth."* This was their home, and there was our Lady's little house. What else does the evangelist tell us about our Lord's childhood? . . . St. Luke says nothing about the flight into Egypt (only St. Matthew records that), and simply adds: *"And the Child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in Him."* These are only a few words, but they contain a great deal. Can you explain them? . . . The Child Jesus grew like any other child. His beautiful body was developed gradually and gained strength by work to do work. Growth of this sort is quite natural. But how could Jesus grow in wisdom and grace? Was He not from the beginning full of

wisdom and grace? How ought we to understand these words? . . . A little rosebud gradually opens until it is a full-blown rose, and in the same way our Lord gradually revealed His heavenly wisdom more and more plainly. Just as the sun rises higher in the sky, and gives out more light and heat, so did Jesus, little by little, allow the light of grace to shine out more plainly in His holy life.

Questions for repetition.—What did Simeon prophesy about the Child Jesus? . . . In what sense was Christ set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel? . . . What did Simeon say to our Lady? . . . How was his prophecy fulfilled? . . . What do we know about Anna, the holy widow? . . . What impression did the sight of the Divine Child make upon the venerable old woman? . . . In what sense can Jesus be said to have grown in wisdom and grace? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) To-day we are told twice that Christ was the Messias. How do we know that He is the promised Redeemer and Son of God? . . . (b) Simeon and Anna knew Him only by the light of the Holy Ghost. Can we have faith by our own power? . . . When did the Holy Ghost plant faith in our hearts? . . . (c) What feast commemorates our Lord's presentation in the Temple? . . . (d) In saying the Rosary we recall the presentation, think of the Fourth Joyful Mystery. (e) When does the Church remind us that Mary is the Mother of Sorrows? . . . On the Friday in Passion Week and on the third Sunday in September. In the litany we invoke her as "Queen of Martyrs."

2. *Why is this Gospel read just after Christmas?* . . . First the angels proclaimed the birth of Christ; then the shepherds spread the joyful tidings, and to-day Simeon and Anna both tell us that

Christ, the Messias, has come. Now people have to make up their minds whether they will fight on Christ's side or against Him. This is the chief thought brought before us to-day. Many speak against Him, and neither love nor believe in Jesus. You, too, must decide to which party you will belong? Which do you choose? . . . You want to be true to Jesus? Then you must grow as He did, not only outwardly, but inwardly, you must grow in wisdom and grace. He will help you to do this, for you can do more than Simeon and Anna, who could only look at Him, or hold Him in their arms. You can receive Him in your hearts when you go to Holy Communion. Promise Him that you will be faithful to Him, and ask Him always to remain with you.

SUNDAY AFTER THE CIRCUMCISION

Return of the Holy Family From Egypt

Introduction.—We read in last Sunday's gospel of the return of Our Lady and St. Joseph with the Divine Child from Jerusalem to Nazareth. What had happened in the meantime? . . . The three Wise Men had been going about Jerusalem asking: "Where is the new-born King of the Jews?" Herod took alarm, and feared to lose his power; he was haunted day and night by the thought of the new-born King, and at last, being unable to rest, he plotted his destruction. What was Herod's plan? . . . Cunningly devised as it was, it did not succeed. How was the Divine Child saved from Herod? . . . In the night an angel appeared to St. Joseph and spoke to him, saying: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." This order was hard to obey, and Our Lady must have thought at once of holy Simeon's words: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."

A journey to Egypt lasted eight or ten days, and for the greater part of the way the road passes through a desert, where there is no water. Just at the edge of the desert stands a very old wild fig tree, and close beside it a spring of water. An old legend tells us that the Holy Family stopped to rest under this tree. Our Lady was exhausted by the long journey across the desert, and suffered greatly from thirst. She prayed to God, and suddenly a spring bubbled up from the earth.

The Holy Family remained in Egypt between two and four years, occupying a little house that is still pointed out in the neighborhood of Cairo. St. Helena caused a church to be built over it. To-day's gospel tells us of their return.

I. GOSPEL: Matth. ii, 19-23.

1. Death of Herod.
2. Apparition of the angel.
3. Return of the Holy Family.

II. EXPLANATION: 1. *Death of Herod.*—The Holy Family found a safe refuge in Egypt, for Herod had no power there. What horrible crime did he commit in Bethlehem? . . . (The Holy Innocents were the first martyrs for Christ. We honor them on December 28th, very soon after Christmas.) It was not long before God punished him. What was the cruel king's end? The Jewish historian Josephus tells us: "The tyrant was seventy years of age, but, being afraid of losing his authority, he condemned his own son to death, and sent messengers to Rome asking the emperor to confirm the death sentence. Meanwhile he was attacked by a disease, and an inward fire consumed him. He had a most intense craving for food and drink, but could neither eat nor drink on account of unbearable pain in his intestines. His body swelled up, and worms bred in his flesh. It became daily more difficult for him to breathe, and violent convulsions in all his limbs gave him an altogether unnatural strength. He knew that no cure was possible, and this knowledge gave rise to a perfect frenzy of rage, for he was aware that every one was looking forward with joy to his death. What did the monster do? He caused the chief men among the people to be arrested, and gave orders that they were to be killed, as soon as he had himself breathed his last, so that in this way there might be mourning all over the country. Only five days before his death

he had his son executed. In his despair he attempted to kill himself with a knife, but it was taken away, and at last he died.

2. *Apparition of the Angel.*—The deadly enemy of the Divine Child was dead, but his friends, who had suggested the massacre of the Holy Innocents, were still alive. Soon, however, they too were struck down by the hand of the Lord, for a rebellion broke out, and many of them perished. How did Joseph learn that the danger was over? . . . What did the angel tell St. Joseph to do? . . . *"Arise, and take the young Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel."* You understand now why the angel added: *"For they are dead that sought the life of the Child."* How do you think Our Lady and St. Joseph received this news? No doubt with deep thankfulness to God, for they had again found by experience that He never forsakes His people. They must have been glad, too, to go back to their own home.

3. *Return of the Holy Family.*—They set out homewards, travelling, as we are told, along the seashore. The angel had only said that they were to go to the land of Israel; they did not know to which town. Bethlehem was one of the first places that they would reach, and St. Joseph seems to have thought at first of settling there; perhaps he said to himself that the Divine Child had been born in that town, and so it was probably God's will that He should grow up there. He was, however, in a state of uncertainty, for he heard *that Archelaus reigned in Judea, in the name of Herod his father.* Archelaus was Herod's eldest son, and not much better than his father, so St. Joseph was afraid to go to Judea, being anxious about the holy Child's safety, and his determination to go elsewhere was strengthened by a warning given him in his sleep. Where then did the Holy Family settle? . . . At Nazareth, which was thenceforth their home; the prophets had foretold long before:

"He shall be called a Nazarite." [Nazarite means branch or blossom, and Isaias says: "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse (David's father), and a flower shall rise up out of his root" (Is. xi, 1).]

Questions for Repetition.—When could the Holy Family return to their own country? . . . How was God's justice displayed in the case of Herod? . . . Why did St. Joseph think of settling at Bethlehem? . . . Which town was our Lord's earthly home? . . . What prophecy was fulfilled by His living at Nazareth? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Points for Instruction.*—(a) What does the history of the Holy Family show us very plainly? . . . The Divine Child was in danger of death, but God sent His angel, and protected the Holy Family on the way to Egypt, and then brought them safely back home. We can see the action of God's Providence here. What do we mean by God's Providence? . . . Why are so many wicked things done in the world, *e. g.,* the massacre of the children in Bethlehem? . . . (b) God sent an angel to St. Joseph; it must have been the guardian angel of the Holy Family. How do the holy angels feel towards us? . . . St. Joseph obeyed the angel's words at once. How ought we to behave towards our holy guardian angels? . . .

2. *Why does the Church order this gospel to be read to-day?* . . . The preceding gospels told us about our Lord's infancy; this one carries on the story, and brings us to the close of the first period of His life. After His return home from Egypt, He grew up in the quiet little town of Nazareth. We, His brothers and sisters, ought also to grow and make progress day by day. This is what the Church wishes to impress upon us to-day. Have you made progress since Christmas? Have you kept the good resolutions that you made then? Or are you no better than you were before?

If so, Jesus cannot be pleased with you, and you are not truly the holy Child's brothers and sisters.

3. *What practical lesson can we learn from this gospel?* . . . Like Mary and Joseph, we ought to have childlike confidence in God's Providence. We are in His hand, and if God be with us, of whom shall we be afraid? Of course, God acts sometimes like a wise father, and punishes His children, but ought we to be discontented and grumble? No, that would be sinful.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Introduction.—After their return from Egypt, the Holy Family lived at Nazareth, and the Divine Child developed like a beautiful flower, unseen and hidden. We hear nothing of Him until He reached the age of twelve. To-day's gospel tells us something that took place then. According to the Jewish law, every male Israelite was bound to celebrate the three chief festivals (the Pasch, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles) in the Temple at Jerusalem. When a boy was twelve years old he was reckoned as a "son of the law," and was required to obey its precepts; thenceforth he had to take part in these pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of the Lord. Women often went, too, but out of devotion, and not as a duty.

I. Gospel: Luke ii, 42-52.

1. The Holy Family at Jerusalem.
2. Loss of the Boy Jesus.
3. Finding of Jesus in the Temple.
4. The Hidden Life of Jesus.

II. Explanation: 1. *The Holy Family at Jerusalem.*—*"His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch, and when He was twelve years old, they went up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast."* The Pasch is at our Easter, and was instituted in thanksgiving for the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. It lasted a week, and was the chief festival of the Jews, a sort of great family gathering of the whole nation. What do the words "according to the custom" tell us? . . . Our Lady and St. Joseph loved God very much and were zealous in

keeping His holy law; and Jesus went with His parents. It was probably not the first time He had gone to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage, but this was the first journey that He made after becoming subject to the law in this respect. Why have we an account of this particular journey? Partly because of the extraordinary things that happened during it, and partly because we may learn from it how careful Jesus was to observe the law, in spite of being Himself the Lord of the law. After the festival every one returned to his own home.

2. *Loss of Jesus.*—Our Lady and St. Joseph, like other people, started homewards, having a journey of nearly ninety miles before them. Where was the Boy Jesus? . . . How could His parents have been so careless? How was it possible for Him to be lost? It is easy to account for His being lost, for several hundred thousand Jews from all parts used to assemble for the feast, and, when it was over, immense crowds poured out of Jerusalem in all directions. Moreover, it was usual for the pious pilgrims to walk in groups, the men alone, and the women alone, and the young men also by themselves. The children, however, could go with either the men or the women. When did Mary and Joseph discover their loss? . . . You can imagine what alarm filled their hearts. They asked all their acquaintances if they had seen the Child, but no one could tell them anything about Him, so they turned back to Jerusalem to look for Him.

3. *Finding of Jesus in the Temple.*—Where did Mary and Joseph find our Lord at last? . . . You can imagine the scene: a group of venerable men, with gray hair and long beards, and in their midst stood the Divine Child; they all gazed at Him with astonishment, perceiving that He was no ordinary boy. Whence had He His wonderful wisdom? Even Mary and Joseph were amazed at see-

ing Him. How did our Lady express her anxiety? . . . She said: *"Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."* Did she mean to reprove our Lord? No, she was only giving utterance to her motherly love and distress. But did not the Divine Child deserve a reproof? How could He stay behind, without saying anything to His parents? Did He not fail in His duty to them? No, that was not possible, for He was always a model of obedience, always humble and retiring, unwilling to put Himself forward. There must be some mystery concealed in His staying behind in Jerusalem and appearing in the Temple. . . . The key to the mystery is given us in His reply to our Lady's question. *"How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* His parents did not understand what He meant, but you can easily do so. . . . He meant to say: "It was My Father's will that I should reveal Myself to the world and display My Divine wisdom, and so I stayed behind. My Father's will is higher and more sacred than that of My parents." Our Lord's answer was intended to teach Mary and Joseph something, but in a gentle, loving manner. He wants also to suggest very tenderly that the time would come for Him to leave His Mother altogether, for such was the holy will of God. *His Mother kept all these sayings in her heart.* Our Lady suspected that some deep mystery underlay the behavior of her Divine Child, but it was only later that she perceived what it was. Do you understand it now? By staying behind and by speaking as He did, our Lord foreshadowed, as it were, His public life and ministry; He was on this occasion, for the first time, a Divine Teacher, but His appearance was like a momentary flash of lightning; it was soon over, and them He vanished again from the knowledge of men.

4. *The Hidden Life of Jesus.*—For eighteen more years our Lord

lived quietly at Nazareth. We know nothing of this period; it is altogether veiled from our eyes. St. Luke tells us nothing except: *"He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."* These few words tell us a great deal; Jesus was a model of obedience. Think what that means—the Son of God became a humble and obedient Child; the high and holy God was subject to poor human beings! What a wonderful thing! And what a marvellous obedience! He never considered whether He should obey; He never argued or complained, but He obeyed His parents' slightest word or sign. He obeyed them for love of God, for parents are God's representatives, and that is why we serve God when we are obedient to them.

The gospel concludes with the words: *"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and man."* You already know what these words mean. . . . Jesus grew older day by day, like any other child, revealing His Divine wisdom more and more, like a flower bud opening into a perfect blossom. He became more virtuous and more holy, and so He was loved both by God and men. (*Cf. Sunday after Christmas.*)

Questions for Repetition.—Why have we a record of the Holy Family's journey to Jerusalem to keep the Pasch? . . . How could Mary and Joseph lose the Child Jesus? . . . In what words did our Lady express the anxiety that she had felt? . . . How did Jesus justify His action to His parents? . . . What do we know further about our Lord's early life? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for Instruction.*—(a) Mary found her Divine Son in the Temple. Let us think of her sorrow and joy when we say the Fifth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. (b) The Child Jesus in the Temple sets you an example how to learn and pray. Why did He stay behind in the Temple? . . . Our holy

Mother the Church calls all her children to God's house every Sunday. What is required by the Second Commandment of the Church? . . . How do we sin against the Second Commandment? . . . Is it enough just to hear Mass? . . . Ought we to be satisfied with just hearing Mass? . . . (c) Jesus in His parents' house sets us an example of obedience. What do children owe to their parents? . . . How do children sin against their parents? . . . What threat did God utter against wicked children? . . . What reward may good children expect? . . .

2. *Why did the Church assign this Gospel to to-day?* . . . Hitherto we have been hearing of our Lord's Infancy; now we hear of Him as a Boy. The Church sets Him before us as our example, bidding us look at Him. He should be our model both in the house of God and at home. Moreover to-day's Gospel introduces those of the following Sundays, and to-day for the first time we see Jesus as the Divine Teacher.

3. Our Lord's example suggests some questions that you will do well to ask yourselves. How do you pray? How do you behave in church? Do not forget that it is a grace to be allowed to pray and go to church. Are you obedient? The Son of God was obedient, and yet you often refuse to obey! Remember that unless we are obedient, we shall never reach heaven. Our Lord's Childhood is like a mirror of virtue, and the more you look at it, the more beautiful will you become, not in body—for that does not matter—but in soul. People ought to be able to say of you too that you are advancing in wisdom as well as in age, and in grace with God and man.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

The Marriage at Cana

Introduction.—This Gospel takes us back to the beginning of our Lord's public life; He was thirty years of age, when He left His home at Nazareth and received Baptism at the hands of St. John. On the following day He called His first disciples, John and Andrew. Andrew said to his brother Simon: "We have found the Messias," and brought him to Jesus. In what way did Christ at once distinguish Simon? . . . Why did He give Simon another name? . . . The fourth disciple called was St. Philip. It was enough for our Lord to say to him "Follow Me," and he was ready to be an Apostle. St. John gives us a beautiful account of the call of Nathanael (St. Bartholomew). . . .

With these five disciples Jesus turned towards Galilee, which was three days' journey distant. On the third day they reached Cana, where a marriage was taking place. To-day's Gospel tells us what happened there. Cana is a village about five or six miles northeast of Nazareth on the slope of a hill. It is surrounded by figtrees, and in the valley below is a stream of water, the only one in that region. It must have been from this stream that the water was drawn, which Jesus turned miraculously into wine. At Jewish weddings there was generally a steward of the feast, whose duty it was to provide all that was required. He used to taste the food and the wine before they were handed to the guests. As a rule a relative or friend of the bridegroom's was appointed to hold this honorable office. It was customary among the Jews for people to wash their hands before and after eating, and that was why great vessels full of water were standing at the entrance of the

house—each holding about nine gallons. Now let us read the Gospel.

I. GOSPEL: John ii, 1-11.

1. Failure of the wine at the marriage feast.
2. Our Lady's remark.
3. The miracle.
4. The disciples' faith.

II. EXPLANATION: 1. *Failure of the wine.*—*"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there."* Perhaps you are surprised that our Lady went to a wedding. She may have been related to the family or else a friend of the bride's. There was no doubt a great deal to do and to arrange before the marriage, and Mary was always glad to do any act of charity. *"Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage."* What reason can you suggest for this invitation? . . . Our Lady had probably told the bridal couple that He was in the neighborhood, and so the bridegroom, being a hospitable man, invited Him and His disciples, so that a larger company than had been expected assembled at the feast. It is easy to understand why the wine failed, if this was the case; arrangements had not been made for so many guests. You can imagine the embarrassment of the hosts. What were they to do? They were ashamed to say anything in the presence of their friends, and they did not know whence to procure further supplies.

2. *Our Lady's remark.*—Mary was quick to see what was amiss; she always sympathizes with good people, and she knew how to help them. She did what she had never done before, and, going to Jesus, said to Him: *"They have no wine."* Do you understand what she meant to suggest? . . . She was quietly drawing our Lord's attention to the difficulty and at the same time hinting that

He could remove it; in fact, she was asking Him to work a miracle. What did Jesus say in answer to His Mother's request? . . . *"Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come."* How could our Lord refuse so roughly to do what His Mother wanted? . . . The words sound harsh, but they are not really so. He addressed her as *"Woman,"* but there is nothing contemptuous about the word, it is rather a title of honor, more like *Lady* with us. What was His real meaning? . . . He meant to say: "Dear Mother, working miracle is not your affair, but Mine and God's. I am no longer your Son now; I am the Messias, and it is not the Will of My Heavenly Father that I should perform miracles yet. When the time comes, I shall be ready to help." You see that our Lord's answer conveyed no reproof, but a piece of information to His Holy Mother. *"His Mother saith to the waiters: 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.'"* You see, our Lady had understood quite well what Jesus meant; she did not think that He wanted to reprove her, but to grant her request. Meantime the wine had failed completely, but just where our need is greatest, God is ever ready to help; and now the moment had come for our Lord to work the miracle.

3. *The Miracle.*—What preparations were made for the miracle? . . . *"There were set there six waterpots of stone."* Jesus ordered them to be filled with water, and no sooner was this done than the great miracle was accomplished, and over forty-five gallons of water were changed into wine. What order did our Lord then give to the servants? . . . *"Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast."* He was much astonished when he tasted the wine. How did he express his surprise? . . . Among the Jews it was the custom to serve the best wine first, and afterwards wine of an inferior quality; he said, we do the reverse, and serve the best last.

4. *Faith of the disciples.*—This was Christ's first great miracle. St. John says emphatically: *"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee."* What was our Lord's intention in working this miracle? . . . He wanted to help the wedding party out of their difficulty and to do them a service. Yes, that was one reason, but there was another higher one, which the evangelist tells us: *"He manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him."* Our Lord wanted to reveal His Divine dignity and power quite plainly for the first time, thus strengthening the faith of His disciples. As yet they were still like children in their faith, but they were to become strong as men, for it would have to be put to a severe test at the time of our Lord's Passion. This miracle undoubtedly made a deep impression upon them that they never forgot.

Questions for Repetition.—At whose suggestion had Jesus and His disciples been invited to the marriage? . . . What caused the bridal party great embarrassment? . . . How did our Lady try to help them? . . . Explain how our Lord's answer was not a reproof, but implied His consent to do what she wanted. . . . How can we see that our Lady understood what He meant? . . . What did Jesus tell the waiters to do? . . . Why was the steward of the feast so much astonished? . . . What did Jesus effect by this great miracle? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Perhaps you are surprised that our Lord went to a marriage feast. Whatever He did, was done for our instruction. What did He teach us then? . . . That Christians may take part in festivities and friendly gatherings, provided that they are orderly and respectable. There is no harm in being happy and lighthearted, only we ought never to lose sight of our final aim—God and heaven. With regard to any merry-making or amusement we ought to ask ourselves: "Would Jesus be

present? Is anything going on that is sinful or shameful in the eyes of God? Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (I. Cor. x, 31). Jesus wanted to teach us something else, viz., that marriage is an honorable condition. By His presence He blessed the marriage bond, and it was probably at Cana in Galilee that He raised matrimony to the dignity of a Sacrament. What does St. Paul say about Christian marriage? . . . "This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church" (Eph. v, 32).

(b) The miracle of changing water into wine occurred at the beginning of our Lord's public life. At the end of His Life He again changed one thing into another in a far more wonderful way. . . . At the Last Supper He changed the wine into His own precious Blood. This mysterious change continues to take place in Holy Mass. How grateful the bridal party at Cana must have been to Jesus for helping them by a miracle! Ought we not to be a thousand times more grateful to Him for the miracle of transubstantiation?

(c) Our Lord worked His first miracle at the request of His Holy Mother. This fact is certainly not without significance. He wished to show us how great is our Lady's influence, and how everything comes to us through her. It was for this reason that St. Bernard called her "Interceding Omnipotence." We ought always to have childlike confidence in the Holy Mother of God, for she is also our Mother. Of all the angels and saints to whom do we owe the greatest honor? . . .

(d) Why was not St. Joseph invited to the marriage? . . . He must have died during the years of our Lord's hidden life. Because he died so beautiful a death with Jesus and Mary beside him, we venerate him as the patron of a holy death. "Jesus, Mary and Jo-

seph, I give you my heart and my soul." "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony." "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you."

2. Why has the Church assigned this Gospel to the Second Sunday after Epiphany? . . . When Jesus was twelve years old, He came forward for the first time as a teacher, showing what He would do and be later on. Now He began His public ministry with a great miracle, and thus strengthened His first disciples in their faith, and induced many of the people to follow Him. The miracle ought to *confirm us, too, in our faith and also in our love of Jesus.* This is the chief thought that we should carry away with us to-day.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jesus Heals a Leper and the Centurion's Servant

Introduction. To-day we are carried in thought to the neighborhood of the Lake of Genesareth. Near the little town of Capharnaum is the Mountain of the Beatitudes. Whence did it get its name? . . . The Sermon on the Mount was just over, and our Lord was coming down the hill, when on the way He cured two sick people, one was suffering from leprosy and the other from palsy. Do you know what sort of disease leprosy is? . . . There are still lepers in the Holy Land, and they look like walking corpses. Their bodies, clothed as a rule in wretched rags, are covered with boils and horrible sores; their faces are disfigured, and their eyes are running. In many cases sufferers from this dreadful disease lose their hands or feet, for the body, whilst still alive, rots away. Leprosy used to be regarded as a punishment inflicted by God for impurity of life, and was, therefore, considered a disgrace. A poor leper was excluded from all intercourse with other people; if any one came near him, he had to call out: "Unclean." Food was put at some particular place for him to come and fetch it, as if he were a dog. Indeed he had a miserable existence, and it was no wonder that he longed for death to release him from it. You all know what palsy or paralysis is; like leprosy it is generally incurable.

I. Gospel. Matth. viii, 1-13.

a.
1. The leper's request.
2. Our Lord grants his request.
3. Our Lord tells the leper what he must do.

b. { 1. The centurion's request and faith.
2. Our Lord praises his faith.
3. Cure of the sick man.

II. EXPLANATION. (a) *Cure of the leper.* 1. *The leper's request.*—Jesus was coming down from the mountain, followed by a crowd of people, when suddenly a leper met Him. This man had plainly heard of the wonderful miracles wrought by our Lord, so he summoned up his courage, forced his way through the crowd, and cast himself in adoration at the feet of Christ. His request was short and heartfelt: *"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."* What do these words tell us? . . . The poor man was full of faith and confidence, as all his behavior proved.

2. *Our Lord grants his request.*—Jesus felt sorry for the poor leper, and was delighted at his firm, though humble faith. Unable to refuse what was asked, our Lord replied simply: *"I will, be thou made clean."* The answer was a short as the prayer. At the same time He touched the leper, and heavenly virtue flowed from Him, instantly removing the hideous disease. Tell me why Jesus touched the sick man? It was not necessary, for His Word was sufficient to cure him, but we may be sure that He had some reason for doing so. . . . He did it for the sake of the people around Him; there was to be no mistake about the miracle, and we find it easier to believe what we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands. This miracle undoubtedly made the people more ready to believe the glorious truths that they had just heard during our Lord's sermon on the Mount.

3. *Our Lord tells the leper what to do.*—Jesus dismissed the man whom He had cured with some words of admonition. *"See thou tell no man."* Why was he not to tell anyone? Had Jesus done

anything wrong? . . . Christ wanted to teach us humanity. When we have done any good work, we ought not to go and boast of it, like the Pharisees. If it is God's Will, others will soon find out what we have done; God will take care of that. Our Saviour proceeded to impose a penance upon the man: *"Go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them."* Whenever a leper was cured of his disease, he had to go to Jerusalem and show himself to a priest, for it was part of the priest's office to declare people to be clean from leprosy. At the same time, in accordance with the law of Moses, he had to bring a lamb for sacrifice, and he himself was sprinkled with the lamb's blood and anointed with oil. After that he was regarded as clean, and might again associate with others. It seems strange that Christ sent the man to a priest. Was He not greater than all the priests in the world? . . . The law of Moses had not yet been abolished, for it remained in force until Christ had completed His sacrifice on the Cross. That was one reason; but the chief one is indicated by the words: *"for a testimony unto them."* What do they mean? . . . Our Lord was saying to the man: You must convince the priests that I am not an enemy to the law; you must testify to my being the Messias, so that they too may be cleansed from the leprosy of unbelief.

(b) *Cure of the centurion's servant.*

1. *The centurion's request and faith.*—Jesus was on His way to Capharnaum when a centurion met Him. (A centurion had a hundred soldiers under him.) In spite of being a Roman and a pagan, he was well-disposed to the Jews. St. Luke says that he had even caused a synagogue to be built for them (vii, 5). He came to Jesus and said: *"Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented."* What do these words show? . . . The

centurion was very good-natured; the sick man was only his servant, but he cared for him, and loved him, as if he had been a son and not a servant. The centurion was ready to believe in Jesus; very likely he had heard much about Him and witnessed His miracles. Our Lord answered at once: *"I will come and heal him."* But the centurion did not want our Lord to come; what did he reply? . . . *"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof."* How much faith and humility are revealed in these words! The centurion meant: "I am not worthy to entertain so great a guest in my house, for I am a poor sinner; nor is it necessary that you should come; you need only say one word, and my servant will be cured." How did he add emphasis to his meaning? . . . By adding: *"For I also am a man under authority."* Do you understand the comparison? He meant: "I am only a man, a centurion, bound to obey orders, yet, when I say anything, my soldiers obey me. You have all the forces of nature under your control, and you need only give an order, and the sick man will be cured."

2. *Our Lord praises the centurion's faith.*—Jesus was astonished at this display of faith, and exclaimed: *"Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel."* But how could Christ be astonished? Was He not aware of the man's faith? Of course He saw the firm faith in the centurion's heart, but He spoke thus for the sake of the people. The words of praise of the centurion contain a sharp reproof to the Jews. . . . Look at this pagan's faith, you Jews who are so slow to believe. Our Lord added a solemn threat; read the words beginning: *"I say to you that many shall come."* . . . What does this passage mean? . . . That many heathen of all nations would enter the Church, the Kingdom of God on earth, and so reach heaven; but the Jews, although destined at first for heaven, would be thrust down to hell, where they would

weep and gnash their teeth in pain and fury at their misery, which they so richly deserved.

(3) *Cure of the sick man.*—How did Christ reward the centurion's faith? . . . By saying: *"Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee."* No sooner was the word uttered, than the servant was cured. This second cure was even more wonderful than the first, for Christ touched the leper, but He did not so much as see the servant sick of the palsy.

Question for Repetition.—(a) How did the leper by word and deed display his faith in Christ? . . . How did our Saviour show His power to work miraculous cures? . . . What instructions did Jesus give to the man who was cured? . . . Why were these instructions given? . . .

(b) What did the centurion ask of our Lord? . . . What disposition was revealed by his request? . . . By what words did the centurion show his deep humility and childlike confidence? . . . What did our Lord say in praise of the centurion? . . . How did Jesus foretell to the Jews the punishment that they would receive at the last day? . . . How was the centurion's confidence rewarded? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) The leper and the centurion both set us a splendid example of faith. What is the right sort of faith? . . . When is our faith universal? firm? living? . . . (b) The centurion sets us also a beautiful example of Christian charity. He feels his servant's suffering as if it were his own, and does all in his power for him. When do we love our neighbors as ourselves? . . . When is charity active? . . . Why ought we to love our neighbors? . (c) We ought to learn a lesson in humility from the centurion. Whenever Holy Communion is given, the Church makes use of his words: "Lord, I am

not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed." With what faith and humility ought we to say these words! Shall we Christians be put to shame by a pagan? Think to whom you are going, and who is coming to you. Say: "Who art Thou, O Jesus, and what am I? Thou are all holy, and I am a wretched sinner, and yet Thou comest to me!"

[What likeness is there between the cure of the leper and the Sacrament of Penance? . . . Sin is the leprosy of the soul; leprosy causes death, and mortal sin leads to eternal death. The leper begged earnestly for help, and a sinner too must pray earnestly for grace. With a single authoritative word Jesus healed the leper, and, by the authority of Christ, a priest pronounces the words that cleanse our souls from the leprosy of sin. The leper received a penance from Christ; the sinner receives one from the priest.]

2. *Why is this Gospel read at this point of the ecclesiastical year?* . . . Jesus had been instructing the people, and then He strengthened their faith by these two miracles. We, too, have been listening to His instructions, and as the year goes on *our faith and love of Christ ought to grow stronger.* This is what the Church wishes to impress upon us to-day. There is nothing that strong faith cannot effect; the stories of the leper and the centurion teach us this lesson. Let us pray: "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke xvii, 5).

EASTER SEASON

Introduction.—The first part of the ecclesiastical year is over, and now we enter upon the second part; the time before Easter from to-day to Holy Saturday, and the time after Easter, until the Ascension, make up the season or period of which Easter is the centre. The first three Sundays have special names, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima. In ancient times many Christians and now we enter upon the second part; the time before Easter but later on this custom was changed, and since about 600 A. D., when Gregory I. was Pope, the fast has begun on Ash Wednesday throughout the Church. The old names, however, have remained, so that Septuagesima meant the first Sunday in a fast of seventy days, Sexagesima the first Sunday in a fast of sixty days, and Quinquagesima the first Sunday in a fast of fifty days.

The time between Septuagesima and Ash Wednesday is a time of preparation for the great fast, hence violet vestments are worn at Mass, as violet is the color denoting penance.

What is the importance of this Easter season in the Church?—It is the greatest of all the seasons in the year. During it we consider Christ the High Priest, Christ in His humiliation and His exaltation.

At first we think of Him teaching, calling us all into the Kingdom of God; then as suffering and dying, and lastly as risen and glorified.

What duty is imposed upon us Christians at this time of year?—By sincere repentance it behooves the worldly man to die and the spiritual man to rise again. This is the lesson taught by the Gospels of the Easter season.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

Introduction.—When did our Lord utter this beautiful parable? Not long before His Passion. He was with His disciples near the Jordan, when a rich young man came and asked Him: "Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" What did our Lord reply? . . . He told him to become poor, but the young man would not do this and went away sad. Then our Saviour said: "Amen I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." St. Peter answered: "Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee; what then shall we have?" Our Lord's reply was:—"Amen I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration (resurrection) when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His Majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting. And many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first" (Matt. xix, 28-30). The parable follows immediately after these words.

I. Gospel: Matt. xx,1-16.

The parable contains two chief points:—

1. The calling of the laborers.

2. The payment of the laborers.

Let us look first, as usual, at the outside of the parable, and then at its kernel or meaning. You ought to understand the words

thoroughly, and then you will be better able to grasp the deeper meaning that they convey.

II. EXPLANATION: (*a*) *The Parable.*

(1) *The calling of the laborers.*—There used to be many beautiful vineyards in the Holy Land. (It is otherwise today, for the Turks rule the country, and they do not approve of wine.) Consequently there was plenty of work, for the cultivation of vines requires much care; in spring the soil has to be loosened and weeds uprooted; later on the vines must be pruned and tied up, and finally the grapes must be gathered and made into wine. Everyone knew all about it, and so Jesus took it as the subject of His parable. He tells us that a certain householder had a great vineyard. His ordinary workmen could not do all the work without assistance, so the master went out to hire others. He went *early in the morning.* At what hour would that be? . . . In the East the day is reckoned from sunrise to sunset. It was spring-time, when the daylight lasts from six in the morning until six at night. It must therefore have been at six in the morning that the householder went out to look for laborers. Where did he go? He knew that there were always men in want of work standing about on the open space in front of the city gate. The custom still prevails in the East. He agreed with the men whom he hired to pay them a denarius, that is about 20 cents in our money—the ordinary wages for a day's work. But there was much to be done, and the laborers were few, so what did the householder do? He hired other laborers at the third hour, about 9 o'clock. This time he said nothing about a day's wages, but only: *"I will give you what shall be just."* He did the same at the sixth and the ninth hour, at noon, and at three in the afternoon. The day was drawing to a close, and the work was still unfinished, so he went out once

more, and still found men unemployed and sent them too to the vineyard.

(2) *Payment of the laborers.*—Evening came, the time for payment. What orders did the householder give to his steward? . . . Every workman received a denarius, the last being the first to be paid. Was that not unfair? . . . Those who had been hired first thought it unjust and murmured, saying: *"These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats."* It was true; they had been hard at work from early in the morning until the evening, and had toiled through the mid-day heat. They were right, but the householder was right too when he said: *"Friend, I do thee no wrong.* You have your day's wages, what do you want more? It is not your business what I pay to others. I can do what I choose with my own property. You are unreasonable for looking at others with envy and ill will."

(b) *Interpretation.*

(1) *The calling of the laborers.*—*"The Kingdom of heaven is like to a householder."* What does that mean? . . . The Lord of the Kingdom of Heaven acts like a householder. The householder is our Heavenly Father, the Lord of the vineyard. The vineyard is God's Kingdom here and in heaven. We human beings are the laborers. The householder sends the laborers into his vineyard, some early and some late. Who are those sent early in the morning? They are the people who have lived from childhood as God's servants. Those sent at the third hour are those who were indifferent and careless at first, but soon improved and began to lead a good life. Those sent at the sixth and ninth hour are men who only began to think of God and live for Him when they had

reached middle age, and those sent at the eleventh hour repented quite late in life and led thenceforth a life of penance. What is meant by the evening, the time of payment? That is the day of our death, when we can work no longer, and it is also the last judgment. The steward who pays the laborers is Christ, for He will be our Judge, and the denarius given in payment is heaven, life everlasting.

(2) *Payment of the laborers.*—Now comes the chief matter:—what did our Lord intend to teach us in this parable? At the beginning and end He said *that the first should be last and the last first,* so this is the chief thing in it, but what did He mean? . . .

Some serve God from early in the morning, that is to say, all their lives; but others begin to serve Him at the eleventh hour, at the end of their lives, and yet both classes obtain the same reward—heaven. Is that unfair? What does the reward depend upon? Upon God's grace and our own cooperation. God can give His grace as and to whom He will. He surely has a right to do so. He gives to one sinner an abundance of grace with which the sinner cooperates faithfully, so that in a short time he has earned the same heavenly reward as another may earn in a lifetime. Only think of the good thief! He had but an hour or two to live, and yet became a saint. Thus the parable teaches us that to distribute grace is God's affair, and so it is with the glory of heaven.

Now you will be able to understand the conclusion: *"For many are called, but few chosen."* Most are called to receive ordinary graces, only a few to receive extraordinary ones. What were the Apostles to learn from the parable? . . . St. Peter had said: "Behold we have left all things, and have followed thee; what therefore shall we have?" Our Saviour had given them a glorious promise: "You shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes."

But—and this was the lesson intended for the disciples—this will be due not to your merits, but to God's grace,—therefore be humble and exalt not yourselves.

Questions for repetition.—Why does Christ compare the kingdom of heaven with the lord of a vineyard?—What do the various hours of work represent in the life of a man?—What is the hour of payment?—Which words contain the chief point of the parable? —What is the chief thought running through it? . . .

III. Application.

1. This parable contains several grains of gold dust, most important doctrines,—let us try to discover them. (a) The householder sends all who are willing to work into his vineyard. "Why stand ye here all the day idle? Go ye also into my vineyard." God wishes us all to go to heaven, but we cannot enter without payment. God does His part and we must do ours. . . . Why are we sent into this world? . . .

(b) When will God pay us? On the day of our death. What will be the things for which we shall be judged? . . . What becomes of a soul after the particular judgment? . . .

(c) The denarius paid represents heaven. All the laborers obtain the same kind of payment, viz., heaven, but all do not receive the same amount. The reward is proportionate to the work. What do we earn by good works? (d) The chief thing is always God's grace. Can we be saved by our own exertions? . . . What is sanctifying grace? Why is grace an unearned gift? . . .

(2) *What significance has this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . We are preparing for Lent, the season of penance. We ought not to stand idle, for we do not know when the twelfth hour, the hour of our death, will come. But we know that, if we labor faithfully in our Lord's vineyard, we shall receive heaven as our reward.

The chief lesson that we have to learn to-day is that Christ calls us to work with Him, to cooperate with Him. But we must not forget the other great truth, that we are nothing of ourselves, and owe everything to God's grace. Ought we to take credit to ourselves if we do any good work, or if we are better than others? Only foolish people could do such a thing, true Christians always think: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I. Cor. xv, 10), and in heaven we shall realize the truth of these words even better than we can do now.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

Parable of the Sower

Introduction.—We read to-day, as we did last Sunday, a very instructive parable,—that of the sower. Where did our Lord utter this parable? We do not know with certainty, but in all probability it was not far from Capharnaum, on the Lake of Genesareth. It was uttered in the springtime, at which season the hills all around resemble a magnificent garden, even at the present day, but in our Lord's time the country was a real paradise, and the shores of the lake were covered with populous towns and villages. Everywhere people came to hear the great Teacher and to see His miracles. Most, it is true, were influenced by curiosity rather than by anxiety regarding their salvation. The crowd grew larger and larger, until at last Jesus entered a little boat and sat down. This was His pulpit, and on the shore stood the people in crowds. He then began to teach them.

I. Gospel: Luke viii, 4-15.

1. Jesus tells the story of the parable.

2. The disciples ask Him what it means.

3. Jesus explains it.

II. Explanation: 1. *The Parable.* I must begin by explaining the parable, and then you will understand better what it means. I suppose you have all seen a man sowing seed. Our Saviour's hearers were quite used to seeing seed sown. The cornfields in the Holy Land are not like ours, and especially in the neighborhood of Capharnaum, which is very hilly, they are quite different. Only

small strips of earth on the heights and in the valleys are capable of cultivation, and either beside each little field or right across it runs a narrow footpath. The ground is rocky in places, and the soil has not much depth. Among the rocks grow thistles and brambles, and no amount of work would succeed in destroying them. Now you will be able to understand what our Lord said of the seed.

"Some of the seed fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down." Men and beasts, especially asses, use the footpaths, and any seed falling on them must inevitably be trodden down. *"And the birds of the air devoured it."* In Palestine there are a great many sparrows and pigeons, who are very bold and come to pick up the seed. *"Some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture."* Where the soil is very shallow, the young plants cannot be firmly rooted; they shoot up quickly and wither equally quickly in the heat of the sun. *"Some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it."* Prickly thistles grow very fast, and soon choke other plants, which die for want of light and air. *"Some fell upon good ground, and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred-fold."* Corn does not yield so much with us, but in Palestine it would be nothing unusual.

Our Lord concluded the parable with the words: *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."* We know that with regard to every parable, the story is always only the outside or shell, the meaning is the kernel inside. Most of our Lord's hearers were quite satisfied with the story and did not trouble about its meaning. People are always the same, and children act in exactly the same way. When they are being taught their religion, they notice things that do not matter, and pay no attention to the chief point. Hence our Saviour said: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." What

does this mean? Everyone has ears, and the people about Him were not deaf! . . . Many have ears, yet they hear not, and what they are taught passes into their ears, but not into their hearts. Our Lord meant that all who had a good will should think about what He had said, and find out the meaning.

2. *The Disciples' Question.* The disciples thought about the parable but did not understand it. *"His disciples asked Him what this parable might be."* They did not ask Him at once, but after the people had gone away. Might not the others have come, too, and asked for an explanation? Of course, and our Lord would gladly have given it. How do you know this? . . .

Now let me see who can think accurately.

Why did Jesus say: *"To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables"?* . . . He meant: "I speak in parables, so that they can see, and yet not perceive; they can hear, and yet not understand." But why did Jesus make such a distinction between the disciples and the other people? Because the disciples had thought about what He had said, and the rest had not. It was the old truth: God will not do everything, man must do his part also. What is the meaning of: *"That seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand?"* . . . If a man cares nothing for his religion, he may hear its doctrines a hundred times, but he will not understand them inwardly. He will be a sinner in future as he has been in the past.

3. *Interpretation of the Parable.*—Our Lord Himself explained the parable, so we need not say much about it; there are only a few points requiring further explanation.—*"The seed is the Word of God."* How do we hear the Word of God? In sermons and religious instructions, when priests speak not of themselves, but because God has commissioned them to go and preach the Gospel

to all creatures.—What is represented by the seed that fell by the wayside? *"They by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh the word out of their heart."*—Do you know how he does it? God said once about the tree of knowledge in Paradise: "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die." How did the devil then take away God's Word out of Eve's heart? By saying: "No, you shall not die . . . your eyes shall be opened." So Eve ceased to believe God and sinned. The devil always acts in the same way. Perhaps a man listens to religious instruction, but his heart is as hard as a well-trodden path. The devil comes and whispers to him: "That is not true, do not believe it," and so takes away God's Word out of his heart, "lest believing he should be saved."

What is represented by the seed that fell upon rocky soil? *"They are they, who when they hear receive the Word with joy."* Some people are ready to shed tears of emotion when they hear a fine sermon, but no sooner have they left the church than they forget all about it. At the smallest temptation to anger or impurity, or even if some one laughs at them, they cast aside all that they have learned, and fall back into their old sins. *"In time of temptation they fall away,"* because they are worldly people with no depth of character.

What is represented by the seed that fell among thorns?—*"They who have heard, and, going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life."* Think of the rich young man, who cared more for his money than to follow Jesus. There are plenty of such people, who let a month pass without going to church, and do not trouble about Confession and Communion even at Easter. Why? Is it because they are wicked? No, only because they think that they have no time; they care so much for their money, their

business or their amusements that religion is choked in their hearts, and *"they yield no fruit."*

What is represented by the seed that fell on good ground? . . . *"They who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."* What fruit did our Lord mean? The good works of a Christian life; but, of course, patience is necessary, for many have begun well and ended badly, for want of perseverance.

Questions for Repetition.—On what kind of soil does the seed produce no fruit? . . . On what kind of soil does the seed bear fruit? . . . Who is the sower? . . . What is the field? . . . What is the seed? . . . What sort of hearts are like the hard field paths? . . . What sort of hearts are like the rocky and the thorny soil? . . . What sort of hearts are like good soil? . . .

III. APPLICATION. 1. *Some lessons to be learned* from this Gospel. (*a*) The field is the human heart, which can bring forth fruit with God's grace. Does God give everyone His grace? . . . What must we do to obtain grace from God? . . . (*b*) The seed is the Word of God. We ought to want to hear His Word. Ought we to be satisfied with just hearing Mass on Sunday? . . . (*c*) In many hearts the good seed is choked by thorns. This happens when people do not live a life of faith.—When is our faith living? . . . Is it enough just to have the faith in our hearts? . . .

2. What has the parable of the sower to do with Sexagesima Sunday? . . . We saw on Septuagesima Sunday that Christ was calling us all to work in His vineyard. To-day He calls us again, saying: "Christians, make ready your hearts! Put aside all that would be a hindrance to God's Word. Your hearts should be good soil, for then only will you bring forth good fruit, and share in the fruits of our Lord's sacrifice on the Cross. The chief lesson that

we have to learn is therefore:—"Christ is telling us to hear the word of God."

3. Examine your consciences a little. Are your hearts good soil, or are they like a hard path? Has the devil ever come to take away the Word of God out of them? He is sure to come in human form, making bad companions tell you not to be so stupid as to believe all that the priests say. I warn you of this beforehand, that you may see at once when he is coming. Or are your hearts like rocky soil? This often happens. Many children appear suddenly full of zeal for religion, so that one might fancy they intended to become saints all at once. But their zeal blazes up and dies out, just as straw does, when you set it on fire, and soon they are more careless than ever. Or are your hearts like the thorny soil? Some children do not like saying their prayers and going to church; they care for anything rather than for Holy Communion. They have no time for Mass on Sundays, and invent all sorts of excuses for not going —"I had to run an errand," "I had to go to fetch something." They show plainly enough that they will grow up to be children of the world and not of God; and what fruit will they bring forth? Take care that the good seed of God's Word falls on good soil, and then the harvest will be good, too. Amen!

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Jesus Foretells His Sufferings and Cures a Blind Man

Introduction.—Our divine Saviour had been journeying along the bank of the Jordan until He was not far from the Dead Sea; then He turned westward to Jericho—the distance was not great, it would take us about three hours to walk. Jericho used to be a beautiful city, situated near the slope of the mountain, and its shady palms and fragrant gardens made it resemble an earthly Paradise. The present town of Jericho is a miserable place, lying in the midst of the desert near the Jordan. It is about 20 miles from Jerusalem, but the road is bad and rises almost the whole way, for Jericho lies below sea-level, and Jerusalem 2,400 ft. above it. What we read in to-day's Gospel took place probably on the Friday before Palm Sunday. Our Lord was going up to Jerusalem for the last time, to suffer and die there. Just a week later He hung dying on the Cross.

I. Gospel. Luke xviii, 31-43.

The Gospel falls naturally into two parts, and each contains two chief points.

1. Jesus foretells His Passion.
2. The disciples do not understand Him.
3. The blind man's request.
4. Cure of the blind man.

II. Explanation.

1. *Jesus Foretells His Passion.*—Why did our Lord say: "Behold we go *up* to Jerusalem"? . . . The road from Jericho to

Jerusalem rises over 3,000 feet, passing through a dreary, barren, mountainous region. *"All things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man."* . . . What had the prophets written about our Lord's sufferings? . . . Daniel foretold very precisely when Christ would suffer and die. He wrote: "From the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again unto Christ, the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, . . . and after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain" (Dan. ix, 25, 26). The time had now come when everything must be accomplished.—David had prophesied in one of the Psalms: "I am a worm and no man; the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi, 7).—Isaias also wrote: "I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me and spit upon me" (Is. l, 7).—David represents the Messias as saying: "They have dug (pierced) my hands and feet, they have numbered all my bones" (Ps. xxi, 17), and in another place: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou leave thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv, 10). Our Lord was referring to these prophetic words when He said: *"He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon. And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again."* Was all this really fulfilled? . . . Listen to what is said in the Gospel about it: "And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel together against Jesus, that they might put Him to death. And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (Matth. xxvii, 1, 2).

The Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death, so they delivered Christ up to Pilate, who, like his soldiers, was a pagan.

This is how the story goes on: "Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him" (John xix, 1). "The soldiers . . . stripping Him put a scarlet cloak about Him, and platting a crown of thorns they put it upon His head and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying: 'Hail, king of the Jews.' And spitting upon Him, they took the reed and struck His head. And after they had mocked Him, they took off the cloak from Him and put on Him His own garments, and led Him away to crucify Him" (Matth. xxvii, 28-31). St. Matthew records the Resurrection and tells us that the angel said to the women: "Fear not you, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen as He said" (xxviii, 5, 6).

You see then that everything foretold by the prophets and by Christ Himself was fulfilled. I have quoted the words in which for the third time our Lord foretold His Passion. The first time was after St. Peter's solemn confession, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." St. Matthew tells us that from that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief-priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again (xvi, 21). The second prediction of His death was given after the Transfiguration, when Jesus "taught His disciples and said to them: 'The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed, He shall rise again the third day'" (Mark ix, 30).

2. *The disciples do not understand.*—What impression did our Lord's prophecy make upon His disciples? . . . *"They understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said."* They loved their Divine Master as good children love their father, and now He spoke

of suffering and death! They had often been astonished at His wonderful power, and now He was to be given over helpless into the hands of His enemies! They could not reconcile all these things one with another. But why did not the Apostles ask our Lord to explain Himself? . . . They were afraid. When Jesus first foretold His death, St. Peter contradicted Him, saying: "Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee." Do you know what our Lord replied? "Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men" (Matth. xvi, 22, 23). Poor St. Peter must have been quite crushed by such an answer. What did our Lord mean by it? . . . He meant to say: I must do God's will, not the will of men. Do you want to hold me back from doing God's will? If so, you are acting like a devil.

3. *The blind man's request.*—Whilst they had been talking they had been advancing towards Jericho, and crowds of people thronged the road, being on their way to keep the Pasch at Jerusalem. A blind man sitting by the wayside heard a number of people passing, and asked what was going on. Someone told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. The blind man had often heard of Jesus and of the great miracles He had wrought, and he said to himself: "This is the right moment! it must be now or never!" So he began to cry out: *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."* Why did he call our Lord "the Son of David"? . . . Because our Lady, His Mother, belonged to the royal line of David. The people were annoyed with the blind man for calling out; perhaps they were afraid of the Pharisees, or thought he might detain Jesus too long; but he paid no attention to their remonstrances, and cried out much louder: *"Son of David, have mercy on me."* What did the poor man's behavior and words show? . . . That he was full

of faith and confidence, and also had very deep respect for Jesus.

4. *Cure of the blind man.*—Our Lord stood still, and the blind man was brought to Him, but Jesus did not cure him at once, and asked first: *"What wilt thou that I do to thee?"*—Why did He ask this question?—To test the man's faith, for, where there was no faith, there could be no miracle. Of course our Lord could read the man's heart, but He questioned him for the sake of the people around, and then, having restored his sight, said: *"Thy faith hath made thee whole."* What was the result of this miracle? . . . The man believed in Christ and followed Him to Jerusalem to give thanks there to God, and the faith of all the people was strengthened.

Questions for repetition.—What did the prophets say about Christ's sufferings and death? . . . What had Christ Himself foretold? . . . How did the disciples receive their Master's words? . . . Why did they not ask Him for an explanation? . . . What happened when Jesus came near to Jericho? . . . How did the blind man show his faith and gratitude?

III. Application.

1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Why did Jesus so often repeat the prophecy of His Passion? . . . He wanted to prove that He knew everything and never lost sight of His approaching sufferings. What do we mean by saying that God knows everything? . . . Jesus wanted to show also that He was going of His own accord to suffer and die out of love and pity for us poor sinners. Was Jesus forced to suffer death? . . . Why did He wish to suffer and die? . . . He wanted to prepare His disciples, so that they might not lose faith in Him when He was put to death.

(b) Christ displayed His Almighty power in dealing with the blind man. He only said: "Receive thy sight," and immediately

the man saw. What do we mean by saying that God is omnipotent? . . . We can learn from this story how kind Jesus is. The people rebuked the blind man, but our Lord welcomed Him kindly.

2. Why is this Gospel very suitable for Quinquagesima Sunday? . . . We are just going to enter upon the solemn, holy time of Lent, and we ought to take pleasure in thinking about our Lord's Passion and Death; they should be as it were the daily bread of our souls, and the Church desires them to be so especially in Lent; hence to-day we have heard how our Lord Himself foretold them. —The blind man is a type of a sinner. Many Christians are blind in their souls, for grievous sins have extinguished the light of grace within them, and (what is worse) they have no idea of their own misery, and do not know that in their blindness they are on the brink of eternal destruction. These poor people have to be made to see; they ought to think of Christ's Passion and Death and of their own end; they ought to cry out with true contrition: "Jesus, have mercy on me." Then in the Sacrament of Penance Christ will utter the consoling words: "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath made thee whole." Are any of you blind? If so, you must not remain so. Cry out with contrition: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," and begin at once to prepare to make a good Confession and Communion at Easter.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Our Lord's Temptation

Introduction.—In last Sunday's gospel we heard of Jericho, and to-day's gospel turns our thoughts again in the same direction. Jericho lies in the plain of the Jordan, on the western side of which is a rugged mountain called Quarantana. At one time hundreds of hermits dwelt in its rocky caves, leading lives of prayer and penance. In this desolate region our Lord spent forty days and nights in preparation for His public ministry. What did He do, when He was thirty years of age? . . . After this long time of penance He was tempted three times by the devil—this is what we read about in to-day's gospel.

I. Gospel: Matth. iv, 1-11.

1. Jesus fasted in the desert.
2. Jesus was tempted three times.
3. Angels came and served Him.

II. Explanation: 1. *Jesus fasted.—Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert.* This was the Holy Ghost, not an evil spirit. Our Lord has just been baptized and was "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke iv, 1). Now the Holy Ghost guided Him and our Lord was inwardly impelled to go into the desert. Why did He go there? *To be tempted by the devil.* He did not wish to fare better than we do, and as we all have to struggle against the spirit of darkness and his temptations, our Saviour desired to set us an example. This was His first reason, but the second was that He wished to prepare Himself for His high and holy work as the Messias.

In the desert Jesus spent His time in prayer and penance, and His penance was severe, for the region is perfectly barren, it is a bare, rocky wilderness, and our Lord went there just in the cold, rainy season. He fasted without interruption for forty days and forty nights. How could He possibly live so long without food or drink? . . . Our Saviour had supernatural nourishment,—prayer and meditation, which formed His daily bread, so that He was able to overcome the natural feeling of hunger. It was not until forty days had passed that in obedience to God's will the sensation of hunger made itself felt;—*"afterwards He was hungry."* That was when the tempter came and tried to lead our Saviour into sin. He could not do so inwardly, so he tried outwardly. What did he say?

2. *First temptation.—"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* Did not the devil know that Christ was the Son of God? . . . Undoubtedly he knew, for John the Baptist had proclaimed it publicly, but Jesus was so poor and humble that the devil seems still to have been uncertain, so he resolved to find out for himself and at the same time to tempt our Lord. How did he act? . . . He almost pretended to be sorry for Him, and suggested that as He was hungry, He might display His Divine power and so obtain bread to satisfy His hunger. Jesus could have done it; only a word was necessary to work the miracle. Why did He not speak it? Because He would have been obeying the devil! How did our Lord withstand the tempter? He quoted some of God's words: *"It is written: Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God"* (Deut. viii, 3). What did He mean? . . . He meant to say: "I have another kind of food, the word of God, and that is enough. Moreover, with a word God could supply Me with bread." In this way our Lord withstood the first temptation.

Second temptation.—The devil soon came again, and, quick as lightning, carried our Lord through the air to the holy city, a distance of nearly twenty miles, where he set Him upon one of the pinnacles or roofs of the Temple. Towards the south the hill on which the Temple stood is precipitous in its fall down to the valley of the Cedron. It makes one shudder to look down to the depths below. Why did our Saviour allow Himself to be treated in this way? . . . We need not be surprised, as He allowed Himself even to be crucified by the devil's agents. How could Satan accomplish such a task? . . . He had been once a most powerful angel, and still retains great strength. He probably thought that he could induce our Saviour to cast Himself down, so he called upon Him saying: *"If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down,"* and then the evil spirit, too, quoted Holy Scripture, and added: *"for it is written that He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone"* (Ps. ix, 11, 12). But Jesus would not do what the old serpent suggested, and again defeated him with some of God's words: *"It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"* (Deut. vi, 16). That is to say: "It is wrong and sinful to ask God to work such a miracle for no reason at all. I will not do so."

Third temptation.—Once more did Satan put forth his skill. He took our Lord to the top of the mountain known as Quarantana, whence there was a splendid view over the city of Jericho, with its many palm trees, the plain of the Jordan, the Dead Sea and the mountain ranges in the far distance. The tempter displayed all these things to our Saviour and offered to give them to Him, provided that Christ would consent to worship him: *"All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me."* Satan is indeed

the father of lies,—how could he offer to give what was not his own? How could he claim to be worshipped as God? Full of holy indignation, Christ replied: *"Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve."*

3. *The Angels came to Jesus.*—There was no longer any doubt,—Christ was the Son of God; *then the devil left Him.* All at once everything was changed; the desert became a paradise, and *angels came and ministered to Him.* They brought food from heaven, and fell down to adore Him. How true it was that "not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." A word spoken by God sends angels bringing miraculous food to our Lord. How could the devil venture to approach our Lord at all? . . . We must not imagine the devil to have appeared in a horrible form; no, he came fair and radiant as if straight from heaven, yet he could not deceive Christ, who recognized him at once.

Questions for Repetition.—For what purpose did our Lord go into the desert? . . . What gave occasion to the first temptation? . . . What proposal did the devil make to Jesus? . . . What words of Holy Scripture did our Lord use in reply? . . . What was the second temptation? . . . On what did the devil base his suggestion? . . . With what words of Holy Scripture did our Lord reject it? . . . What was the third temptation? . . . How did our Lord overcome it? . . . What was the reward of His victory? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Our Lord lived for forty days and nights on prayer and fasting. These are good works pleasing to God, as we know from Holy Scripture. Which good works are especially recommended to us in Holy Scripture? . . . "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold" (Tob. xii, 8). Our Lord wished to

strengthen Himself by means of prayer and fasting, so as to prepare for the temptations that were coming upon Him. We ought to act in the same way, and arm ourselves against Satan's attacks. Why should we observe the law of fasting? . . .

(b) Let us look once more at our Lord's temptations. "Command that these stones be made bread." This was a temptation to self-indulgence. "Cast Thyself down,"—a temptation to pride and presumption. "All this will I give Thee,"—a temptation to avarice or lust of the eyes, a desire to have all that one sees. These three temptations assail everybody, and Satan will not spare you; his devilish plan is to tempt, mislead and ruin you. What do the evil spirits feel towards us? . . . Act as our Lord did! When the tempter comes trying to lead you into disobedience, impurity or theft, say: "Begone, Satan; I belong to God, and will serve no one else." How can we prevent the suggestions of evil spirits from doing us any harm? . . .

2. *Why has the Church appointed this gospel to be read on the First Sunday in Lent?* . . . There is a good reason. At Easter time we think of Christ as our high priest, and to-day we see Him preparing for the sacrifice of the Cross, by means of prayer, fasting and humiliations. This is the beginning of His priestly office; He is the Highpriest making atonement. His example ought to teach us to pray and do penance in Lent, and if the tempter comes, resist him boldly, and when you have conquered, angels will come and serve you. They will keep you in all your ways, and when you have made the last sacrifice of your life, they will guide you along the road to heaven and bring you to the presence of God.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

The Transfiguration

Introduction.—The Gospel read on the first Sunday in Lent was about our Lord's temptation, which took place at the beginning of His public ministry. To-day's Gospel contains the account of the Transfiguration, which occurred at the end of His life, not long before His Passion and death. The evangelists do not tell us where this wonderful event took place; they only tell us that Jesus led them on to a high mountain, but we know from St. Jerome that Mount Thabor was the scene of the Transfiguration. It is in Galilee, seven or eight miles to the east of Nazareth, and is about 1,800 feet high. Long ago a magnificent church marked the spot; it was built by St. Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine, in honor of the great mystery, but at the present time nothing can be seen but some ruins. On the feast of the Transfiguration (Aug. 6th) the Catholics in Nazareth go in procession to Thabor, and Mass is said on the top of the mountain.

I. Gospel: Matth. xvii, 1-9.

1. Jesus was transfigured.
2. Moses and Elias.
3. St. Peter's request.
4. The bright cloud.
5. God's voice.
6. Christ's order to tell no man.

II. Explanation: 1. *Jesus was transfigured.*—Our Lord took Peter, James and John with Him. Why were these three allowed

to witness the Transfiguration? . . . These three disciples understood our Lord's teaching better than the rest; they had advanced further in following Him, and they were soon to witness His agony on the Mount of Olives, consequently they needed peculiar strength. *He was transfigured before them.* Our Lord suddenly appeared brilliant. How can that be explained? . . . St. Paul says that in Jesus dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead; and a flash of His divinity shone through the veil of His human body just as sometimes lightning flashes through the darkness of night. *His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow.* St. Luke tells us that this happened whilst our Lord was praying at night. You can imagine what an impression this sudden, wonderful sight would make upon the three disciples—they were quite overpowered by it. What shall we feel when we are allowed to see Jesus face to face in the glory of heaven?

2. *Moses and Elias.*—The disciples were still speechless with amazement when they beheld another vision: Moses and Elias talking with Jesus; and they, too, were glorious in the light proceeding from Him. Why did these two men appear? . . . They represented the Old Dispensation. Moses was the great lawgiver and leader of the Chosen People, Elias was the chief of the prophets. Elias was there in his real body (for he is still alive), and Moses probably appeared in some intangible form. What did they talk about with Christ? . . . St. Luke tells us (ix, 31) that they spoke of His death. We can easily understand why this should be; everyone talks about what is uppermost in his mind; when Christmas comes children speak of nothing else. In the same way the souls of the just in Limbo had been longing for our Lord to come and release them, and they knew that His death on the Cross was very near.

3. *St. Peter's request.*—What effect had the whole vision upon the disciples? . . . St. Peter was enraptured and would have liked to remain there always, for he thought it was heaven on earth, so he exclaimed: *"Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles."* The Apostle did not know what he was saying, for he was beside himself with delight, and could not think reasonably. Our Saviour gave him no answer. Why? Because St. Peter's request was not according to God's will, although there was nothing wrong in it. It was only through the death of Christ that we were to live and be saved.

4. *The bright cloud.*—Immediately afterwards the Apostles saw another wonderful thing: *"Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them."* The cloud or mist came between them and the three glorious forms as a sign that God was there. They could no longer see anything, and probably their eyes were completely dazzled with the bright light. If we look at the sun for a few moments everything else seems to become quite dark.

5. *God's voice.—Lo, a voice out of the cloud saying: "This is My beloved Son."* On two occasions our Lord was solemnly declared by God to be His Son; the first time was at His baptism, and the second time at His Transfiguration—that is to say, at the beginning and end of His public ministry. What was the reason? . . . Everything depends upon Christ's being the Son of God. This time God added the words: *"Hear ye Him."* This took place in the presence of Moses and Elias, the two greatest teachers of the Old Law, and also in that of the future teachers of the New Law. There must be some deep meaning attached to these words. God Himself wished to declare that the Old Dispensation was over and the New was beginning; Christ was the greater teacher of the new Kingdom of God. What effect had all these extraordinary things

upon the disciples? . . . They were filled with holy fear of God's majesty and fell upon their faces, and did not venture to look up or to rise until our Lord touched them, and then the vision had disappeared.

6. *Christ's order to tell no man.*—On the way back our Lord said to His disciples: *"Tell the vision to no man."* Why were they to be silent about it? . . . Because Jesus wished to humiliate Himself, for He wanted to teach us that we, too, ought to be humble, even if we have received extraordinary graces from God. The saints have always been humble. This was one reason, but there was no doubt another. . . . If the disciples had made known all that they had seen, there would certainly have been a great movement among the people, who would strive to make Jesus their king, for the Jews always looked forward to an earthly kingdom to be established by the Messias. In this case a rebellion would have broken out against their enemies, the Romans, and our Lord was anxious to prevent any disturbance which might have endangered the Jewish nation. Why were the Apostles allowed to speak about the Transfiguration after the Resurrection? Because the danger was then over, and their account of this wonderful vision would serve only to strengthen the faith of Christians.

Questions for repetition.—Which disciples were permitted to witness the Transfiguration of our Lord? . . . How may we explain the sudden change in His appearance? . . . What representatives of the Old Law appeared with Him? . . . What did Moses and Elias talk about with Jesus? . . . What did St. Peter wish to do when he beheld the wonderful vision? . . . By what sign did God reveal His Presence? . . . What words did God utter from the cloud? . . . What effect had the whole vision upon the disciples? . . . What command did our Lord give them as they

went down from the mountain? . . . Why did He give this command? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—Why was our Lord transfigured? . . . He wanted to strengthen the faith of the three disciples that they might not cease to believe in Him during His Passion, and they were to strengthen their brethren. They certainly did so, for they proclaimed later what they had seen and heard on Thabor. This glorious revelation of Christ was to them a sure proof of His divinity, therefore St. John wrote at the beginning of his Gospel: "We saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father" (i, 14); and St. Peter: "We were 'eyewitnesses' of His majesty, for He received from God the Father honor and glory . . . and this voice we heard brought from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mount" (II. Peter i, 16-18). How do we know that Christ is God's Son and truly God? . . . What testimony did our heavenly Father bear to Christ? . . . What did the Apostles teach about Christ? . . .

2. *Why do we read about the Transfiguration in Lent?* It seems like light in darkness, but the contrast is only apparent. During His glorious Transfiguration our Lord was occupied with one great thought: His approaching death on the Cross, and He spoke of it to Moses and Elias. We see, too, that the completion and reward of His sacrifice was to be His glory in heaven. Hence the chief thought suggested by to-day's Gospel is that of *Christ, the High Priest, in His glory.*

3. Here we may learn a lesson. In the holy time of Lent we ought to think daily of our Lord's sufferings. Then we shall be glad to fast and do penance, and if it should seem hard, let us think of our reward, the glory awaiting us in heaven. There is no other path for Christians to follow but that of the Cross. St. Paul says:

"If we suffer with Christ, we may be also glorified with Him" (Rom. viii, 17). What intense happiness it will be to share His glory. We shall cry out like St. Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" but our delight will not last only for a few moments, as on Thabor, but for eternity. We cannot understand it, but in heaven there will be joy for ever and ever, and no suffering at all.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Jesus Drives Out a Devil

Introduction.—Our Divine Saviour was a friend of the sick and poor, and helped many of them by His miracles. The cases in which He drove out devils are the most remarkable. If God permits it, devils really have power over people; they can take up their abode in a man and carry on their wicked works, making use of his body as their instrument. We say that such unhappy people are "possessed." One day a man came to Jesus who was the father of a boy possessed by an evil spirit. This spirit desired to kill the boy and had several times thrown him into water and into fire. Our Lord released the poor boy from this wicked, tormenting spirit. Many diseases are really caused by evil spirits, and to-day's Gospel tells us something about them.

I. Gospel: Luke xi, 14-28.

1. Jesus drives out the devil.
2. The Pharisees blaspheme Jesus.
3. Jesus refutes their blasphemous accusations.
4. Jesus turns their charge against the Pharisees.
5. Our Lady is called blessed.

II. Explanation: *Jesus drives out the devil.* The first sentence is remarkable: *"He was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb."* What does that mean? The poor man was dumb, but his dumbness was due to an evil spirit within him, not to any organic defect. At the word of the Lord the devil was forced to depart, and immediately the dumb man recovered his speech, *and the multi-*

tudes were in admiration at it. They perceived clearly that our Lord must be more than human, because He had power over evil spirits.

2. *The Pharisees blaspheme Jesus.—Some of them* (these were Pharisees) *said: "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."* That is to say, they accused our Lord of being in league with the devils. What an outrageous thing to say of Christ, and what shocking blasphemy against God! Others were still doubtful and tempted Him and *asked Him for a sign from heaven.* They wanted to see another miracle and then to decide whether our Lord really possessed power from above. He refused, however, to satisfy their curiosity, knowing very well that they did not believe simply because they were unwilling to do so.

3. *Jesus refutes their blasphemous accusations.*—Our Lord was aware that His enemies were secretly suggesting to the people that He was in league with the devil, so He took this opportunity of refuting the blasphemous accusations made by the Pharisees, and He did it so skilfully that they had absolutely nothing to say in reply. He brought forward two arguments: (a) Beelzebub cannot be trying to overthrow his own kingdom; he would be a stupid devil to do such a thing, and yet that is what he would be doing if he were helping to drive out other devils. (b) Our Lord went on to argue thus: "If I am possessed and cast out devils by the help of the devil himself, then your own followers, who are exorcists, must also be possessed. Will you acknowledge this? No; you maintain that they do it by the power of God. Very well, then you must grant that I, too, cast out devils by the power of God, otherwise you are contradicting yourselves." What could the Pharisees answer? Jesus had driven them into a corner, and they could find no way out of it. Our Lord went on to draw the conclusion from His two

arguments: *"If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, doubtless the Kingdom of God is come upon you."* What did He mean? . . . "If I work my miracles by the power of God, I must be really the Messias, bringing you the Kingdom of God. You acknowledge it yourselves, for I overcome the strong man armed (*i. e.*, the devil), and destroy his kingdom, being stronger than he."

Our Saviour added a serious work of warning to the multitude: *"He that is not with Me, is against Me."* He meant: "You can choose between the Messias and satan—which will you have? Make up your minds." He addressed a further admonition to the leaders of the people: *"He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."* "It ought to be your business to gather the people together for the Messias, but you are stirring them against Me, and preventing them from believing in Me."

4. *Jesus turns their charge against the Pharisees.*—Our Lord had silenced the wicked Pharisees, and then told them plainly a distasteful truth, turning against them the charge that they had made against Him, when they accused Him of being possessed by a devil. He used a parable in speaking to them. Let us read it again. . . . An unclean spirit was expelled and driven by God into the wilderness, so that he might do no more harm. But he found no rest. Why? Because wicked spirits can rest nowhere; they suffer always the torments of hell, and their chief delight is to torture men, too. *"He saith: 'I will return into my house, whence I came out, i. e.,* into the soul whence he had been driven out. He found it empty, bare of grace and virtue, as if it had been swept out. Then he thought: "This is a good place to live in," so he took with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. . . . and the last state of that man was worse than the first. This account was very applicable to the Pharisees. Why? Long before an unclean spirit had entered

the Jewish nation, the spirit of idolatry, and as a punishment the Jews were carried into exile in Babylon, where their misery caused them to abandon their idolatrous practises, and for a time all went well. Soon, however, the spirit of unbelief, pride and hypocrisy took possession of the Jews, and especially of the Pharisees, whose hatred of Christ knew no bounds, so that their last state was worse than the first, and God's wrath fell upon the nation like a devastating tempest. Think of the terrible destruction of the Holy City and the Temple. Was not the parable of the devil, who was driven out, a direct rebuke to the Pharisees? They probably understood it quite well.

5. *Our Lady is called blessed.*—The miracles worked by Christ and the force of His words had aroused the astonishment of the people, who were indignant at the insolent ridicule and obstinate want of faith on the part of the Pharisees. We can see this clearly from what the woman said to our Lord: *"Blessed is the womb that bore Thee."* She meant to say: *"Blessed is Your Mother for having such a Son."* She recognized our Lord's dignity from His words and works, and thought that His Mother, too, must be very great, since her Son was so highly exalted. Jesus gave a remarkable answer: *"Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."* What did He mean? . . . "You call My Mother blessed, and you are right; but she is still greater, still more blessed on account of her great faith. You, too, are blessed, if you hear My words and keep them in your hearts."

Questions for repetition.—How did Jesus render a miserable person happy? . . . What reproach did the Pharisees cast at Christ? . . . With what arguments did our Saviour refute the blasphemies of His enemies? . . . What words of warning did He address to the people and their leaders? . . . In what parable did

Christ proclaim to the Pharisees the punishment that God would inflict upon them? . . . Why did a woman call our Lady blessed? . . . What did our Lord praise in His blessed Mother and in us?

III. Application: 1. This Gospel contains some important *lessons.* (a) The story of the man possessed by a devil shows us the hatred and power of the fallen angels. How do the evil spirits feel towards us? . . . How ought we to treat them? . . .(b) The poor man was dumb. Many people are dumb just where they ought to speak, viz., in the confessional. The devil makes them dumb, so that from false shame and fear they are silent about their sins. What ought a penitent to remember when he is ashamed to confess his sins frankly? . . . (c) The Pharisees blasphemed Jesus. What do we mean by blaspheming against God? . . . (d) Our Lord received their remarks with calm dignity. What reveals to us the sanctity of His life? . . . Jesus refuted the charges brought against Him by His enemies, but He did so with love and gentleness, setting us a beautiful example of charity towards our foes. In what words did Christ order us to practise this charity? . . . His words and works were surely enough to open the ears and hearts of the Pharisees, but they would not believe. Does God give grace to every one? . . . Can a man withstand God's grace? . . . (e) Another important lesson. Our Lady was called blessed on account of her faith. Is faith necessary to salvation? . . . We have to earn heaven by a life of humble faith; now we walk by faith, but hereafter we shall walk by sight.

2. *Why is this Gospel read on the third Sunday in Lent?* . . . Christ stands before us now as a Highpriest about to sacrifice Himself on the Cross. The great day was drawing nearer, and the deadly hatred of His enemies was increasing like a fearful storm gathering over His head and ready to break. By driving out the

devil and by addressing the Pharisees Jesus had intensified this diabolical hatred, and at last the storm broke when the cry arose: "Away with Him, crucify Him." Thus the Gospel again turns our thoughts to Christ's Passion and death. The chief thought is: *Christ, the Highpriest, reviled and blasphemed.*

3. This Gospel is very suitable for Lent. Lent is a season when you purify your hearts in the Sacrament of Penance and sanctify them by Holy Communion. The evil spirits have been driven out of your souls, but you must be on your guard, for the devil might return, bringing with him seven other wicked spirits worse than himself. Beware of falling back into your old sins, for in that case your last state might be worse than the first. This is the warning that the Church gives to-day to all her children. If the tempter comes back and the inclination to sin makes itself felt in your hearts, look at the crucifix and say: "Jesus is hanging on the Cross, and shall I fall into sin?"

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The Miraculous Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes

Introduction.—All the four evangelists give an account of this miracle, although St. John does so most in detail. Let us think what preceded the working of this miracle and what was the occasion of it. Our Lord was at Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. For the first time He had sent out the Apostles to teach and work miracles. He was no longer safe from Herod and the Pharisees, for the former had just caused St. John the Baptist to be beheaded. Soon afterwards the Apostles returned, worn out with their labors and in need of refreshment, but they could not enjoy an hour's rest, in fact they had hardly time to eat, because such crowds of sick and miserable people thronged around our Lord. Then He said to them: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little" (Mark vi, 31). So they got into a boat with Him and crossed the lake, landing at Bethsaida, on the northeast shore. But they were again surrounded by a multitude, who had gone round the lake and arrived before them. On seeing the crowd Jesus took pity upon them, for they were as sheep not having a shepherd (Mark vi, 34). To-day's Gospel tells us what took place next.

I. Gospel: John vi, 1-5.

1. The people surrounding our Lord.
2. The disciples' anxiety.
3. The miracle.
4. The faith of the people.

II. Explanation: 1. *The people surrounding our Lord.*—The introductory words of the Gospel need no further explanation. When our Lord landed, the people were already waiting for Him

on a narrow plain running along the shore, and behind it, inland, was some higher ground. Our Lord turned in this direction and ascended a little hill; the disciples sat at His feet, and below them a dense multitude of men, women and children. Where had they all come from into this desert region? . . . *"The Pasch, the festival day of the Jews was near at hand."* There must have been many strangers among them on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus began at once to speak to them of the Kingdom of God, and to heal them who had need of healing (Luke ix, 11). They were all full of enthusiasm and remained there the whole day.

2. *The disciples' anxiety.*—It was evening, and the people had nothing to eat. What was to be done? Send them away hungry? No, for they were a long way from home. The Apostles were quite at a loss, and our Saviour availed Himself of their anxiety to test their confidence in Him. What did He say to Philip: . . . *"Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"* What ought the Apostle to have replied? . . . He ought to have said: "Lord, Thou canst do all things." Such an answer would have shown that his faith was firm, but he only remarked: *"Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient."* The Roman penny or denarius was worth about 20 cents, so St. Philip meant that forty dollars would hardly buy enough bread for everyone to take a little. St. Andrew whispered gently: *"There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes, but what are these among so many?"* We see plainly that the disciples did not know what to do, and this was exactly what our Saviour desired in order that there should be no mistake about the miracle. Where men are completely helpless He can still deliver them.

3. *The miracle.*—How did Christ come to the rescue? . . . He made the people sit down in groups on the grass. How many were

present? . . . There were five thousand men, and if we add the women and children there must have been almost ten thousand in all. They kept their eyes fixed on our Lord, wondering what was going to happen. Then He took the five loaves and two fishes, looked up to heaven and gave thanks, and after blessing the food, distributed it to the multitude. The disciples undertook the task of distribution and saw to their amazement that, far from diminishing, it constantly increased. All ate and were satisfied. Some unbeliever may say: "That was not a miracle at all. The worthy people only fancied that they had received food; they were really satisfied with the teaching that they had received." There is no sense in such an argument, for if there was no miracle, how can we account for the fact that there was more food left over than there had been at the beginning—twelve baskets full? Those who refuse to believe prefer to accept the greatest nonsense rather than a miracle.

4. *The faith of the people.*—Plain, simple people thought and judged very differently and allowed the miracle to lead them to the right conclusion. They said to one another: *"This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world."* By the "prophet" they meant the Messias, and having acknowledged this fact, they wanted to go a step further, arguing that if Jesus was the Messias, He ought to be their king. They wished to escort Him to Jerusalem and proclaim Him King of Israel at the Pasch. You can easily see what false hopes the Jews cherished about the Messias. They imagined that he would come as a mighty king to deliver Israel from the dominion of the Romans and found a new great Jewish empire. Such hopes were most deceptive. Christ was indeed to found a Kingdom, but it was not of this world. How did He frustrate the designs of the people? . . . He sent His disciples before Him, tell-

ing them to sail straight to Capharnaum, but He went away secretly up the mountain and spent the night in prayer alone.

Questions for repetition.—With what intention did Jesus cross the sea? . . . The people left Him no peace; how did He reward their zeal? . . . Why were the disciples anxious? . . . How did our Lord test St. Philip? . . . What supplies were at hand? . . . How did Jesus act before miraculously feeding the people? . . . How did they testify their faith in the Messias? . . . How did our Lord frustrate their plans? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Lessons to be learned.*—(a) This was the first miraculous multiplication of loaves. It reveals our Saviour's kindness, for He worked a great miracle because He sympathized with the hungry people. Every year there is a wonderful increase of food out in the cornfields. The farmers sow the seed, and it bears fruit thirty, sixty, or even a hundredfold. How good God is to men! What do we mean by speaking of God's kindness? . . . (b) Before our Lord allowed the Apostles to distribute the food, He gave thanks to God. Here we see His piety, which ought to be an example for us. Are you always careful to say grace before and after meals, or do you take your food like animals, with neither prayer nor thanksgiving? Many who receive food from God are ungrateful for it; do you want to be like them? It is certainly not creditable but shameful to show ingratitude. (c) After the people had all been miraculously fed, Jesus ordered the fragments that remained over to be gathered up. This is another example for us to follow. We ought not to waste God's gifts, but rather give some share of them to the poor. Gather up the crumbs and give them, especially in winter, to the poor, hungry little birds, for they, too, are God's creatures. "The just regardeth the lives of his beasts" (Prov. xii, 10).

2. *Why is this Gospel read in Lent?* . . . The reason is quite clear: Easter is close at hand, when it is the duty of every Catholic to make a good Communion. The miraculous multiplication of loaves is a type of Holy Communion. Who gives us this wonderful bread of heaven? Christ, our High Priest, in the unbloody sacrifice of the altar. Therefore we have here again the chief thought proper to Lent: Christ the High Priest. If we wish to define the contents of to-day's Gospel more precisely, we may say that we read in it of *Christ, the merciful High Priest,* the food of our souls.

3. *Why did our Lord work this great miracle?* . . . He wished to strengthen the faith of His disciples and to make the people believe in Him; but He had another motive, too, and we shall not thoroughly understand this miracle unless we remember what took place the next morning. It was then that our Saviour pronounced His mysterious discourse about the living bread from heaven. The miracle of multiplying the loaves was a beautiful type of the wonderful bread of heaven that we receive in Holy Communion. How can they be compared? . . . (a) The bread in the desert was blessed and consecrated by Jesus Christ; the bread is consecrated and changed into our Lord's most holy Body in Holy Communion. What is Holy Communion? . . . (b) Our Lord fed the people miraculously, that they might not faint on their long journey home. Jesus wishes to strengthen us in Holy Communion, so that we may continue to love Him faithfully and persevere on our way to heaven. What graces are given us in Holy Communion? . . . (c) The loaves that Jesus blessed were multiplied in the hands of the Apostles, so that every one had food enough. The bread that we receive in Holy Communion is multiplied and distributed by the hands of the priests, so that every communicant receives Christ whole and undivided.

PASSION SUNDAY

Introduction.—To-day is called Passion Sunday. Why? . . . We ought from to-day onwards to think more than ever about our Lord's sufferings, for Good Friday is now very near. This is what our holy Mother, the Church, wishes us to do.

To-day's Gospel is difficult to understand. The Jews brought blasphemous accusations against Christ, who refuted them. The courtyard of the Temple was the scene of the discussion. What made the Jews begin to abuse our Lord there? He had been teaching, and many people were gathered around Him when the Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Him, saying: "Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery (that is to say, she was a married woman who had not been faithful to her husband). Now, Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one; but what sayest Thou?" Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the earth, but they would not leave Him alone, and asked again what was to be done with the woman. They were plainly laying a trap for our Lord, but at last He lifted Himself up and said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." What happened? One after another they all crept away, and Jesus said: "Woman, where are they that accuse thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord!" "Neither will I condemn thee; go, and now sin no more" (John viii, 2-10). The people gradually came back, and our Lord rebuked the Pharisees sharply for their unbelief, saying finally: "You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. . . . If I say the truth, you believe Me not" (*Ibid.* 44, 45). Then followed the discussion recorded in to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: John viii, 46-59.

1. Jesus rebukes the Jews for their unbelief.
2. The Jews blaspheme Jesus.
3. Jesus refutes their blasphemy.
4. The Jews repeat their blasphemy.
5. Jesus shows their accusations to be false.
6. The Jews wish to kill Him.

II. Explanation: Do not lose sight of the connection of events.—Our Lord had just said to the Jews: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Here in the Gospel He says: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" and at the end we read: "They took up stones to cast at Him." This was their revenge for being put to shame.

1. *Jesus rebukes the Jews for their unbelief.*—Our Lord challenged His enemies by asking: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" What was the answer? . . . There was none, all were silent and made no accusation against Him, being unable to reproach Him with any sin, although the Pharisees were always watching to see what He did. Therefore He was sinless, and therefore He was plainly a being of a higher order than they were, and consequently His doctrine must be true. What followed? They should have believed in Him. This is why Jesus Himself said: *"If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me?"* adding the solemn warning: *"He that is of God, heareth the words of God; therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God."* That is not difficult to understand. The children of God delight in His word, but satan's followers detest it. You must be really children of the devil. Not long before our Lord had told the Pharisees that the devil was their father. His words are still true, for many Christians do not like to hear the word of God because they are in league with the devil,

through their sins. Some children even have no liking for religious instruction or for prayer; they say that they cannot bear to be long in church. Are such people the children of God? . . . I am afraid they are not.

2. *The Jews blaspheme Jesus.*—The Jews were not inclined to put up with our Lord's reproof, so they replied: *"Do we not say well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?"* How could they speak in this way of Jesus? They meant: "You are our enemy, just as the Samaritans are the enemies of our race. You say that we, who belong to God's chosen people, are the children of the devil. You must be possessed by a devil yourself, or you could not say such a thing."

3. *Jesus refutes their blasphemy.*—How did our Lord refute this charge? . . . By replying with quiet dignity: *"I have not a devil, but I honor My Father, and you have dishonored Me."* That is to say: "I only tell you the truth, and that never comes from the devil; by telling the truth I honor My Father, for He has commissioned Me. I am doing My duty, and that is why you dishonor Me by your abuse. *"But I seek not My own glory; there is One that seeketh and judgeth."* Who is meant? . . . His Father in heaven would avenge Christ by punishing those who had insulted His Son. Our Lord then turned to the people, who were well disposed, and tried to encourage them by saying kindly: *"Amen, Amen, I say to you, if any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever."* This is a promise easy to understand: Whoever believed in Christ was to have eternal life.

4. *The Jews repeat their blasphemy.*—The Jews were furious at our Lord's words, for they understood Him to be speaking of the death of the body. Therefore they interrupted Him at once, declaring for the second time: *"Now we know that Thou hast a devil."*

How did they endeavor to prove it? By saying that their forefather Abraham and the prophets were dead, and asking Christ whether He was greater than they.

5. *Jesus shows their accusation to be false.*—Our Lord's answer was remarkable: *"If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing."* What did He mean? . . . He meant: "I might indeed call Myself greater than Abraham and the prophets, but, rather than glorify Myself, I refer you to God, My Father. Through the works that I do, He proclaims Me to be greater than Abraham and the prophets; but *you have not known Him.* . . . You have failed to recognize My dignity from the miracles that you have seen Me work. Why? You do not know My Father, therefore you are blind, too, to My works and to the truth. Of course you assert that you know God, but it is false, and you are liars. There is a difficulty in the words: *"Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it, and was glad."* Try to explain this passage. . . . Abraham looked forward with joy to the birth of the Messias, and from Limbo he really witnessed it, for God revealed to him the coming of Christ.

6. *The Jews wish to kill Jesus.*—Again the Jews misunderstood our Lord and asked Him, partly in mockery, partly in anger: *"Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?"* They thought that He was still a young man, and wondered how He could pretend to have lived at the same time as Abraham. Of course they were thinking only of this life on earth, and not of everlasting life, for they regarded our Lord as a mere man, not believing in His Divinity. So Jesus answered quite plainly: *"Before Abraham was, I am."* Abraham, your ancestor, was only a man, but I am God, I have existed from all eternity. This was too much for the Jews; *"they took up stones to cast at Him."* Why did

they want to stone our Lord? . . . Because He called Himself the Son of God, and they thought that He was speaking blasphemy. They could not hurt Him, however, though it is not clear how He escaped; He either became invisible, or vanished suddenly in the midst of the crowd. This discussion was at an end, and Jesus had triumphed in it.

Questions for repetition.—What very plain reproof was given by our Lord to the Jews? . . . Upon what did He base the truth of His doctrine? . . . What reproach did the Jews make against Him? . . . How did Christ show their accusation to be false? . . . What was the second blasphemous charge brought forward by the Jews? . . . How did they justify their blasphemy? . . . How did our Saviour show that His enemies were wrong? . . . In what sense is Christ older than Abraham? . . . What was the end of the dispute between our Lord and the Jews? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Lessons to be learnt from this Gospel.*—Christ is truly God. We have three proofs of His Divinity in to-day's Gospel. (a) He is holy; even His mortal enemies had silently to acknowledge this fact. What do we mean by saying that God is holy? . . . How was the holiness of our Lord's life displayed? . . . Because Jesus is holy, His teaching, too, is holy. How did He prove the truth of what He taught? . . . (b) Christ twice spoke of God as His Father, so He must be the Son of God. (c) Christ spoke of Himself as eternal. What words did He use? . . . What was Christ's testimony to His divinity? . . . The Jews nevertheless continued in their unbelief. How do people sin through unbelief? . . . How do they sin against faith? . . .

2. *Why is this Gospel read on Passion Sunday?* . . . What we have heard to-day took place about five months before our Lord's Passion, but it was a prelude to His suffering. Everything occurred

again in a similar way, both before the Sanhedrim and at the tribunal of Pilate. Christ declared on this occasion that He was sinless; Pilate said afterwards that he found no fault in Him. Jesus here calls God His Father; He said later that He was the Son of God. Here the Jews wanted to stone Him for having blasphemed God; later on they cried that He had spoken blasphemy and was worthy of death. There is, however, one difference. On the occasion of which we read to-day Jesus silenced His enemies and disproved their accusations, but afterwards He was silent under all their charges. To-day we hear that He escaped, but then He gave Himself up to His enemies, because His hour had come. You see how the events recorded in the Gospel really foreshadowed the Passion, and therefore this Gospel is very suitable for Lent, and especially for Passion Sunday. We might say that it brings before us *Christ, the sinless High Priest.*

3. The Church represents visibly the way in which our Lord was hidden from His enemies. She covers every crucifix with a purple cloth, so that we do not see our Saviour suffering and dying, although we ought to think of Him all the more. This is the best preparation that we can make for the sorrowful Passiontide upon which we have now entered.

PALM SUNDAY

Our Lord's Entry into Jerusalem

Introduction.—"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." Our Lord said these words to His disciples when they were in the plain of the Jordan. (Cf. Quinquagesima Sunday.) He restored the sight of a blind man near Jericho, probably on the Friday before Holy Week, and on the same day crossed the desolate heights of Judea, arriving at Bethany in the evening. He spent the Sabbath at the house of His friend, Lazarus. Bethany is about an hour's walk from Jerusalem, and the road leads over the Mount of Olives. About halfway, but a little off the road, lay the village of Bethphage, which now exists no longer. Now you will be able to understand the Gospel.

I. Gospel: Matth. xxi, 1-9.

1. Preparations for the entry into Jerusalem.
2. Solemn entry into Jerusalem.

II. Explanation: 1. *Preparations for the Entry.*—On Sunday morning our Saviour and His disciples left Bethany, and when they were near Bethpage, He sent two of His followers on before Him. What commission did He give them? . . . You see how Jesus knew everything and how nothing was hidden from Him. He really required only the colt, but in order that it might be willing to come, He told the disciples to bring the she-ass too. How did our Lord remove the reluctance that they seem to have felt to fetching the asses? . . . He said: *The Lord hath need of them,* speaking as One who had authority. This was the last time that Christ came to Je.u-

salem, and He came not in a poor and humble fashion, as He had done before, but in triumph like a king. That day was the most glorious in all His life on earth, and it was His will that it should be so, and consequently He arranged everything for a solemn entry into the city. The disciples soon came back with the asses, and, having laid their outer garments upon them, they set Jesus upon the colt. Perhaps you are thinking that an ass is not the right sort of animal for a king to ride. But in the East it is quite usual for a prince to ride on an ass, which is more sure-footed than a horse on rocky ground, and is held in higher esteem than with us. The horses in the East are spirited creatures, suggestive of warfare, whereas asses are gentler and more suggestive of peace. Christ was the prince of Peace, not a commander in battle; it was His desire to bring truth and grace to His people.

2. *The Solemn Entry.*—Everything was ready for the solemn procession, and the disciples took their places round their Master. They ascended the Mount of Olives, and many people whom they met on the way turned round and joined them. Then they began to go down into the valley of the Cedron, where hundreds of pilgrims were encamped, who had come to keep the Pasch in Jerusalem. These people asked inquisitively: "Who is this?" And the news spread rapidly: "This is the Messias, the Son of David, the great Prophet." They were filled with excitement and hurried to meet Him, breaking branches off the olive trees and strewing them on His path, or else holding them in their hands in token of peace, whilst others followed the eastern fashion of spreading their garments on the road. In this way a vast stream of people poured into the city through the so-called Golden Gate, crying incessantly: "*Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" The people believed Christ to be the Messias.

Hosanna is a cry of joy, and the mighty walls of the Temple must have reechoed the sound, but the Scribes and Pharisees were annoyed at it, although they were unable to restrain the enthusiasm of the multitude.

Is it not strange that the people had several times wanted to proclaim Jesus their king, and He had always resisted and avoided them, but now He allowed it without any protest, in fact He wished to be honored thus? What can have been the reason? . . . The prophet Zacharias had foretold this glorious entry of the Messias into Jerusalem: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. . . . Behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour; He is poor, and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zach. ix, 9). This prophecy had to be fulfilled. This was the first reason. But who was the daughter of Zion? On Mount Zion once stood King David's royal palace, and also, before the Temple was built, the tabernacle, the sanctuary of the chosen people. Zion was therefore the holy hill of Jerusalem, and by "the daughter of Zion" the prophet meant the holy city. Hence he called to the children of Jerusalem, telling them that the Messias was coming, the King of the new kingdom of God. The second reason was that the Jews were always expecting a great and glorious Messias, and on that day Christ really came as a king to warn His people for the last time to put aside their unbelief and accept Him as the Messias. A third reason was that Jesus wished us to see that He died of His own accord, because He loved and pitied us; no one would have been able to force Him to die, as in comparison with Him all rulers are powerless.

Questions for repetition.—What preparations did our Lord make for His entry into Jerusalem? . . . Why did Christ desire to enter the holy city riding upon an ass? . . . How did the disciples carry out their Master's orders? . . . What caused great crowds of people

to join the procession? . . . What cries of joy did the Jews raise in honor of their Messias? . . . What were the reasons for our Lord's allowing Himself to be publicly honored? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Lessons to be learned from this Gospel.*— (a) Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village, knowing that they would find a she-ass and her colt there, and knowing, too, that the owner would ask what they were doing. Jesus knows everything; He is omniscient. What do we mean by calling God omniscient? . . . We have here another proof of Christ's divinity. How did Jesus give evidence of His divinity? . . .

(b) The prophecy of Zacharias was fulfilled in Christ. What did the prophets foretell about the Messias? By what name did they speak of Him? . . .

(c) The Jews welcomed our Saviour with cries of joy and greeted Him as their King, but they soon changed their minds and ceased to believe. This was a sin against the Holy Ghost. Name the sins against the Holy Ghost. . . .

2. How is Palm Sunday observed in the Church? . . . The palms are blessed and there is a solemn procession during which we sing: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Christ asks for admission at the church door, and in token of this the door is knocked with the foot of the cross. The procession is intended to remind us both of our Lord's solemn entry into Jerusalem and of our glorious entry into the heavenly Jerusalem.

3. *Why is this Gospel read to-day*? . . . That is quite clear; the account of what happened on the first Palm Sunday is read every year on the same day. We think chiefly to-day of *Christ as the kingly High Priest.* He is beginning to ascend the steps of the altar of sacrifice; in a few days He will be laid on the altar of the Cross.

4. There is *one important warning* for us in this Gospel. The Jews cried "Hosanna" with great enthusiasm, and only five days afterwards they shouted "Crucify Him" in their fury. Do you know what Christians behave like the Jews? In Holy Communion Jesus enters our hearts, and, being full of love and joy, we cry: "Hosanna, welcome, O my Lord! Thou are mine and I am Thine." But how do many people act afterwards? They soon fall back into their former grievous sins, and seem ready to cry: "Crucify Him." They crucify Christ over again in their hearts. Will you ever be so ungrateful? Will you ever venture to act so shamefully? Surely not. O Jesus, make us true to Thee till death!

EASTER SUNDAY

An Angel Announces Our Lord's Resurrection

Introduction.—On Good Friday evening some pious men went to Mount Calvary and took our Lord's holy Body down from the Cross, and laid it on our Lady's lap. We think of this scene at the thirteenth Station of the Cross. With deep reverence they wrapped the Body in costly linen, and then carried it to the grave, whilst the women followed weeping. Do you know what the Jewish burial places were like? Many can still be seen. They are in the rocks, and so large that people can enter them. There is first an ante-chamber, and then a narrow passage leading into the actual grave. In it, hewn in the rock, is a stone ledge hollowed out a little, like a coffin. Upon this rock coffin the dead body was laid; it was wrapped in many cloths and anointed with sweet spices, but it was not covered over. Then the grave was closed on the outside with a heavy stone. In a grave of this kind our Lord's sacred Body rested until the morning of the third day. What happened early on Easter Sunday? . . . He rose again resplendent and bright as the morning sun, and came forth from the closed grave. We read in to-day's Gospel what took place afterwards.

I. Gospel: Mark xvi, 1-7.

1. The women went to the sepulchre.
2. The angel in the sepulchre.
3. The angel announced our Lord's resurrection.

II. Explanation: 1. *The women went to the sepulchre.*—We hear of three women. Mary Magdalen, the holy penitent, is well

known to you all. The second Mary was the mother of St. James the Less, and Salome was the mother of St. John and St. James the Great. These three pious women went out of the city to the place where Christ was buried. What did they mean to do? . . . They intended to embalm the holy Body with fragrant spices. But had that not been done before it was put into the grave? Why was it necessary to embalm it again? The first embalming had been done in a hurry, late in the evening of Good Friday, and on the following day, being the Sabbath, no spices could be bought until after six o'clock in the evening. So it was early on Sunday morning that the women went to the sepulchre to perform the last office of love for Jesus. See how they honored and loved our Saviour! But there was one thing that troubled them: *"Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"* Such stones may still be seen in Jerusalem; they are over 3 feet in height and weigh 12 to 16 cwt. Any one who wanted to enter the tomb would have to push aside the stone, that moved along a groove. The women would not have the strength to remove it, and whilst they were discussing what they should do, they reached the grave.

2. *The angel in the sepulchre.*—What did they see? The stone already rolled away from the grave! Who had done that? They entered the sepulchre with feelings of holy curiosity, but they were terrified at the sight of a wonderful form. *"They saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe."* Who was it? It was one of God's angels keeping watch beside the holy sepulchre, for from the moment when our Lord's sacred Body was laid to rest there, this sepulchre became the chief sanctuary on earth for Christians. What effect had the sight of the angel upon the women? . . . It was no wonder that they were astonished and frightened, but their fear was soon changed into joy.

3. *The angel announced our Lord's resurrection.* How did the angel reassure the women? He said: *"Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He is risen, He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him."* The grave was empty, only the linen cloths still lay in it. Christ had really risen, as He had foretold, saying: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (Luke xxiv, 7). The pious women at once remembered these words. What commission did the angel give them? . . . *"Go, tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He told you."* Why was St. Peter especially mentioned? . . . He was the chief of the Apostles and was to be the head of the Church. He was also to lead the disciples into Galilee. Why were they to go thither? It was the home of most of the Apostles; our Lord had spent more time there than elsewhere, and so Galilee was chosen as the place where they should meet Him again. Jesus had already foretold this at the Last Supper, when He said: "After I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee" (Mark xiv, 28). What astonishment must the women and the disciples have felt at hearing from an angel just what Jesus had told them three days previously!

Questions for repetition.—Who were the women who went to the holy sepulchre early on Easter Sunday morning? . . . What office of love did they mean to perform? . . . What caused the women some anxiety? . . . What surprised them at the entrance to the sepulchre? . . . What changed their surprise into great fear? . . . How did the angel soothe the women's fear? . . . What did the angel order the women to tell the disciples? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—The mystery celebrated at Easter had been foretold long in advance by the

prophets. In one of the Psalms King David exclaims: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou give they Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv, 10). Our Lord had plainly declared that He would rise again. Think of the Gospel for Quinquagesima Sunday, in which occur the words: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged Him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again" (Luke xviii, 31-33). Everything took place exactly as our Lord had said. He had foretold His resurrection to the scribes and Pharisees also, saying: "As Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Matth. xii, 40). On another occasion He told them to "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii, 19). Now all the prophecies were fulfilled. What happened on the third day after our Lord's death? . . . Did the disciples also see their risen Saviour? . . . How long did our Lord remain on earth after the resurrection? . . . When we say the Rosary we think of the resurrection in one of the Glorious Mysteries. . . .

2. At Easter the Church sings with joy: "The Lord has truly risen, Alleluia!" To-day we have heard the wonderful tidings from an angel, but the soldiers watching the sepulchre spread abroad a report that, whilst they were asleep, our Lord's disciples had come and taken His Body away. This was a very stupid lie. Who can tell me how stupid it was? . . . There stood a heavy stone before the sepulchre. Was it possible for the disciples to move it away without making a noise and waking the watchmen? And if the guards were asleep, how could they see the disciples? Why were

the soldiers not punished if they had really neglected their duty? Would the disciples have ventured to steal our Lord's body? Can we imagine that plain, honest men, like the Apostles, would have been guilty of such deceitful conduct? No, the soldiers lied boldly, because the chief men among the Jews paid them well to do so.

3. *Why is this Gospel read on Easter Sunday?* Because it tells us how an angel, a messenger from heaven, brought the glad tidings of our Lord's glorious resurrection. On this, the greatest day in the Church's year, we think chiefly of *Christ the High Priest, risen from the dead.* But we, too, ought to rise with Him, as St. Paul tells us: "As Christ is risen from the dead . . . so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi, 4). We ought to rise from the death of sin by making a good confession, and then we can walk in newness of life. Holy Communion will give us strength to do so, and the Church orders all her children to receive Holy Communion at Easter. This is a good preparation for the general resurrection on the last day.

4. Would you like to know what has become of our Lord's grave? A great, round church, called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was built over it, and in the middle is the chapel containing the grave. Let us enter it with deep reverence. We shall come first into a little ante-chamber, called the Angel's Chapel, and then along a low passage into the grave itself. There is room for only four people at a time. This is the spot where once our Lord's holy Body rested in the sleep of death; and hence He rose resplendent on Easter day. What is there to be seen in the grave? A ledge of rock, now covered with marble, on which the Body lay; on the wall are three precious pictures of our risen Lord, and a number of silver lamps, that are like stars, lighting up the darkness. Pilgrims fall awestruck on their knees, for this is indeed a holy place.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Our Lord Appears to the Disciples. Institution of the Sacrament of Penance

Introduction.—The Gospel on Easter Sunday tells us how an angel announced our Lord's resurrection to the women. What else happened on that day? . . . Our risen Saviour appeared six times on the same day. To whom did He come first? Undoubtedly to His holy Mother. Holy Scripture records nothing about this appearance, but we believe that it occurred. Did not Jesus love His Mother better than anyone else on earth? And had she not remained near Him to the end? Surely she must have been the first to see Him again and to receive His Easter greeting. (One of the side chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is called the Chapel of the Apparition. It is venerated as the spot where Jesus first appeared to His Mother.)

The second person permitted to see our Lord was Mary Magdalen, who was weeping near the sepulchre, when suddenly Jesus stood before her. She did not recognize Him until He said: "Mary," and then she cried, "Rabboni, Master." Soon afterwards our Saviour met the other women and said: "All hail," and they came up and took hold of His feet and adored Him. In the course of the day He appeared to St. Peter, and in the afternoon, when two disciples were going to Emmaus, our Lord joined them and walked with them, but they did not recognize Him until the evening, when they hurried back to Jerusalem and found all the Apostles assembled. The latter greeted them with the words: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." Then the two disciples told the Apostles what

had happened on their way to Emmaus. To-day's Gospel contains the account of the sixth appearance, which was the most important of all.

I. Gospel: John xx, 19-31.

1. Our Lord appears to the disciples.
2. He institutes the Sacrament of Penance.
3. Thomas refuses to believe.
4. Jesus rebukes Thomas for his unbelief.
5. The evangelist's concluding remarks.

II. Explanation. 1. *Our Lord's appearance.*—It was the evening of Easter Sunday. All the Apostles except Thomas were together in the room where they had eaten the Last Supper. They had not yet recovered from the horrors of the last few days, and *the doors were shut . . . for fear of the Jews.* All were in a state of excitement and doubt, asking one another: "Has He really risen?" "Will He come back to us?" They were still talking about the good news brought by the two disciples from Emmaus, when suddenly they were aware of a presence, and Jesus glorified stood in their midst. Why was this appearance so wonderful? . . . After the resurrection our Lord's Body was glorified and transfigured; just as the sun's rays can pass through glass, so could His Body pass through walls and doors. What effect had this sudden appearance upon the disciples? . . . St. Luke tells us that they, "being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit" (Luke xxiv, 37). Then Jesus showed them the marks of His sacred Wounds. Think how weak the disciples still were in the faith; they were like little children just learning to walk, and it was not until our Lord actually ate something before their eyes that a light dawned upon them. They recognized their Divine Master and were overwhelmed with joy.

2. *Institution of the Sacrament of Penance.*—Our Lord did not stay long with the disciples, but we must notice carefully what He said and did. Both when He came and when He went away He said: "*Peace be to you.*" The Jews greeted one another thus, but in this case the words had a very special significance. Our Lord meant to say: "The sacrifice of the Cross has been offered, now there is peace on earth." He continued: "*As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*" Why had the Father sent His Son into the world? . . . We had lost the peace of God through sin, so Jesus came to reconcile us with the Father by dying on the Cross, and in this way we regained peace. But many fall back into sin and lose it again. Who can help these poor sinners? Our Lord said: "I also send you," that is to say, "You are to do what I have done; you are to restore to poor sinners the peace that they have lost." How could they do this? Notice what Jesus did. *He breathed on them.* What did His breathing on them show? . . . He explained it clearly, for He said: "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*" You can all understand the importance of these words, for at this solemn moment our Lord conferred upon His Apostles part of their priestly powers and enabled them to pronounce absolution. So it was on the evening of the day when He rose again, that Jesus bestowed on us the Sacrament of Peace.

3. *St. Thomas refuses to believe.*—Thomas had not been present that evening and, of course, as soon as he came in, the other Apostles joyfully exclaimed: "*We have seen the Lord.*" How did Thomas receive the news? . . . He said: "*Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*" These words show us the Apostle's character. He was unwilling to yield. There

was, however, some excuse for St. Thomas; he seems to have been rendered distrustful and bewildered by his grief at our Lord's death and his fear of the Jews, and for this reason our Saviour indulged his weakness. In order to cure this one Apostle of his unbelief, our Lord deigned to appear a second time.

4. *Our Lord's rebuke to St. Thomas.*—This rebuke was given a week later. What resemblance was there between the two appearances? . . . They took place in the same room, and Jesus appeared again when the doors were shut, and again He greeted His followers with the words: "*Peace be to you.*" We can easily imagine the feelings of St. Thomas; he must have been like a man struck by lightning. Our Lord turned at once to him, saying: "*Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing.*" Jesus evidently knew all about it. Poor St. Thomas was quite humiliated and ashamed; with contrition he cast himself at his Master's feet, unable to say anything but "*My Lord and my God.*" He was completely cured of his want of faith,and his heart was glowing with love of Jesus. Our Saviour, however, did not spare him a serious, though loving rebuke: "*Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.*" These words will always be true; when we see and then believe, we have not real faith; faith, to be meritorious, is belief without sight.

5. *The Evangelist's concluding remarks.*—St. John added some remarks of his own at the end of to-day's Gospel. They formed originally the conclusion of his whole Gospel, but afterwards he added a sort of appendix to it. "*Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples.*" What signs did St. John refer to? . . . He meant miracles, but he was referring also to all the things

that prove Jesus Christ to be the true Son of God. Therefore he added: *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in His name."* Now you know why St. John wrote his Gospel. . . . He wanted to bring all men to faith in Christ, and through faith to the life of grace and everlasting happiness. For he who does not believe remains dead in sin, but whoever has faith has everlasting life.

Questions for repetition.—Who were the people who saw our Lord on the day of His resurrection? . . . What were the feelings of the Apostles until the evening of that day? . . . How did our Lord greet His friends? . . . How did Christ convince the disciples of the truth of His resurrection? . . . What power did He confer upon the Apostles? . . . How did St. Thomas receive the news of Christ's resurrection? . . . What proof did the Apostle require to have, before he would be willing to believe? . . . How did Christ satisfy his desire? . . . How did St. Thomas atone for his unbelief? . . . With what words did our Lord rebuke the Apostle for his want of faith? . . . What was St. John's intention when writing his Gospel?

III. APPLICATION. 1. *Lessons to be learned.*—(a) What proofs of our Lord's divinity does this Gospel contain? . . . He appeared twice when the doors were shut, and only God could do that. He gave the Apostles power to forgive sins, and only God could do that. He allowed St. Thomas to worship Him, and God alone could accept worship. St. John says quite plainly: "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." What is the Apostle's testimony to our Lord's divinity? . . .

(b) On Easter day the Apostles received power to give absolution for sins. With what words did our Lord confer this power

upon them? . . . Why can Catholic priests alone give absolution for sins? . . . Why must we confess our sins? . . .

(c) Our risen Saviour is our model; shall we all rise again as He did? . . .

(d) The Catholic Church derives her faith from two sources, Holy Scripture and tradition, but the Protestants base their faith on Holy Scripture alone. What does St. John say that supports the Catholic doctrine? . . . Why must we believe tradition also? . . .

2. *What is the importance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . The chief thought suggested by the Gospels of the Sundays after Christmas is *Christ, the Divine Teacher;* by those read in Lent, *Christ the High Priest;* by those read after Easter, *Christ the Good Shepherd.* This thought is brought before us again today. When our Lord was led out to be crucified, the Apostles were all terrified and fled, but after His resurrection Jesus, the Good Shepherd, collected His scattered sheep. He appeared to them again and again to strengthen their faith in His resurrection. Christ did indeed rise from the dead.

3. Is your faith in the Resurrection as firm as a rock? There are always some Christians who refuse to believe and say: "I will only believe what I see and understand." These are poor doubting souls, like St. Thomas. They flatter themselves that their feeble little intellect can fathom the mysteries of our holy religion and understand them. They can no more do this than they can light up a large church with one solitary taper. People inclined to doubt ought to take to heart the words uttered by our Lord: "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Good Shepherd

Introduction.—To-day's Gospel contains a beautiful parable uttered by our Lord in Jerusalem. He had just given sight to the man born blind. How did the Pharisees show their indignation? . . . They expelled the man who had been blind from their midst, saying: "Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" Yet they boasted of being the leaders and pastors of the people. They were not good but bad shepherds. Why? Because they did not lead their flock to the Messias but to unbelief; they desired not the welfare of the sheep, but their own advantage. Five hundred years before the prophet Ezechiel had said to them: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel that fed themselves! Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds?" (xxxiv, 2). Our Saviour availed Himself of the opportunity to speak about the duties of shepherds, and His discourse was at the same time a serious rebuke to the Pharisees.

I. Gospel: John x, 11-16.

1. The Good Shepherd and the hireling.
2. The love of the Good Shepherd.
3. The care displayed by the Good Shepherd.

II. Explanation: (a) *The scene presented to us.* 1. *A shepherd and his flock.*—The Jews were a pastoral people, and to this day there are many flocks of sheep in the Holy Land. A man, who is not rich, looks after his sheep himself, but one who can afford it hires a shepherd to do so. Shepherd and sheep know and love one another. If the shepherd calls them, the sheep hear his

voice and come to him with confidence, but should a stranger try to entice them to him, they run away.

2. *The flock and its pasture.*—During the whole summer, from March to November, the flocks remain out on the pastures. By day the sheep graze on the mountain slopes and in the valleys, where, however, they find very little food, mostly half withered leaves; but a sheep is satisfied with scanty fare. At night the shepherd leads his flock either into a cavern in the rocks (think of the shepherds of Bethlehem!) or into a sheepfold, which is an open space surrounded by a wall of loose stones, or in some cases merely by a hedge.

3. *The life of a shepherd.*—A shepherd's life is not free from danger, for the sheep have to be protected against fierce enemies, and there are still wolves and jackals in Palestine. As soon as it is dark these creatures come out of their hiding-places and look for booty. Sometimes in broad daylight they attack a flock, killing and carrying off the sheep, and then there is a fight, for a good shepherd will not forsake his sheep, and many a man has lost his own life when trying to defend them. A hireling, however, is more likely to run away and leave the poor defenseless sheep to their fate. This is the parable, and our Lord went on to apply it to Himself.

(b) *Interpretation.* 1. *The Good Shepherd and the hireling.*—Our Saviour said: "I am *the* Good Shepherd." What shepherd did He mean? . . . The one foretold by the prophet Ezechiel (xxxiv, 23): "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David (= Christ, David's descendant); he shall feed them and shall be their shepherd." How may the Good Shepherd be recognized? . . . *"The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."* He would not forsake the sheep that he loved, even though it should cost him his life. Love and loyalty to

his flock are the two chief characteristics of a good shepherd, but it is otherwise with a hireling, who is paid to take care of the sheep, and does not care much about them. When does the hireling show himself to be a bad shepherd? . . . In the hour of danger. Who is meant by the wolf in the parable? . . . The devil and all his agents and helpers, who lead others astray and persecute them. Supposing a priest were to leave his flock during a time of persecution and try to save himself, would he be a good shepherd? No, he would be a hireling; and the sheep would perish for want of a shepherd. (Refer to the various persecutions.) You see, therefore, that priests are bound to fight against evil and to punish it; this is their duty, and if they neglect it, God's wrath will come upon them.

2. *The love of the Good Shepherd.*—How did our Lord prove Himself to be the Good Shepherd? . . . He really laid down His life for His sheep, and suffered the shameful and painful death of the Cross. Many shepherds have followed His example. Remember what you have learned in your Church History; of the thirty Popes who reigned before the time of Constantine almost all were martyrs. They were good shepherds who gave their lives for their sheep. Think of the missionaries in our own time; never does a year pass without some losing their lives. Why did our Lord say: *"I know mine?"* . . . He knows His sheep not only outwardly, but through and through, for He can read the innermost thoughts of men. He uttered these words before the assembled people and the Pharisees, meaning: "I know very well which of you are really My followers, and which run after Me merely out of curiosity." *"And mine know Me."* They know Me by faith. Yes, the humble know Jesus quite well, but the proud refuse to recognize Him. *"As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father."* Our Lord meant: "I am God's Son, and I and My Father are one; I know Him and

love Him; and in the same way those who are Mine know and love Me. *"And I lay down My life for My sheep."* These words refer to "I know Mine." Jesus kept His word, although His followers did not yet understand Him.

3. *The care displayed by the Good Shepherd.—"And other sheep I have that are not of this fold."* Of what sheep had our Lord spoken before? . . . The Jews were chosen first to be His flock, but the Gentiles are also called to be Christians and to enjoy eternal happiness. *"They shall hear My voice."* How did our Lord make the Gentiles hear His voice? He ordered His Apostles to go and teach all nations, and so His voice reached the ends of the world. Have our Lord's words been fulfilled? . . . What was the result of the Apostles' preaching? . . . *"There shall be one fold and one shepherd."* What is the fold and who is the shepherd? . . . The fold is the one, holy, Catholic Church; and the head of it, the Pope, is the shepherd. Our Lord's words were, however, also prophetic. . . . At the end of the world many Jews and Gentiles will be converted, and then there will be one fold and one Shepherd in heaven.

Questions for repetition.—What are the characteristics of a good shepherd? . . . What is the difference between a good shepherd and a hireling? . . . How did Jesus show His love for His flock? . . . How did He display His care for the sheep? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Lessons* derived from this Gospel. (a) Our Lord said: "I am the Good Shepherd." He sets an example to all other shepherds, to bishops, priests and superiors. In what words did He teach us our duty towards our spiritual and temporal rulers? . . . What did He say of those who refuse to hear the Church? . . . (b) Christ said: "I lay down My life for My sheep." Was Jesus forced to die? . . . Why did He wish to suffer and die? . . . (c) Christ said: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd."

What quality of the Church is expressed by these words? . . . Why is the Catholic Church unmistakably *one?* . . .

2. *Why is this Gospel peculiarly suitable to this Sunday?* . . . In autumn a high wind often tears the dry leaves from the trees and whirls them away in all directions. So during our Lord's Passion a storm of hostility broke out against His disciples, who were panic-stricken, and scattered by the tempest; they deserted their Divine Master and fled, so that the words of the prophet were fulfilled: "Strike the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zach. xiii, 7). But our Saviour rose again, and the Good Shepherd gathered about Him His stray sheep. Do you see now why the parable of the Good Shepherd is read on the second Sunday after Easter? Jesus, the Good Shepherd, laid down His life for His sheep, and then He collected them again, so that there should again be one fold and one Shepherd.

3. The Good Shepherd gathered you round Him again at Easter. Many had run away and lost themselves in the wilderness of sin, but He went after them and sought them. In the holy Sacrament of Penance He released them from the brambles of sin, that held the sheep fast, and as a loving Shepherd He laid down His life again for you in Holy Communion. Now He asks you: "Will you be false to Me, and leave Me again? Will you still run after sin?" No, Good Shepherd, we will stay with Thee; we will be Thy faithful sheep and always hear Thy voice.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Our Lord Foretells His Departure from this World

Introduction.—The Last Supper was over, and Jesus had instituted the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, to be for His disciples and for us all a memorial of His love. The disciples were sad. Why? Because they all felt that this was the last time when they would be with their Master. Everything had been very solemn, and though our Lord's words were most loving, His face was sorrowful, and the disciples had never seen Him look as He did then. Soon afterwards Jesus told them plainly that He was about to leave them: "I go to the Father." The thought of His departure filled them with great sorrow, for they would be alone and desolate, and such a prospect gave rise to fear and anxiety in their hearts, so that they were quite bewildered and depressed, though hardly able to understand the bad news. Our Lord could not spare His friends this pain, but He wanted to soothe it and diminish their anxiety, so He uttered a most beautiful farewell discourse, part of which we read in to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: John xvi, 16-22.

1. Jesus foretells their parting.
2. The disciples do not understand Jesus.
3. Jesus comforts the disciples.
4. Parable of the joy of motherhood.

II. Explanation: 1. *Parting and meeting again.*—Our Lord spoke quite plainly of leaving His disciples, but He mentioned also their seeing Him again very soon. *"A little while, and now you*

shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me." There is no difficulty for us in interpreting these words. . . . Our Lord was going to die on the very next day, so in a little while the disciples would not see Him. After three days He would rise from the dead, so in a little while they would see Him again. But why did He add: "*Because I go to the Father*" . . . He wanted to console His friends by reminding them that they would see Him again in God's presence in heaven. Yes, there was to be no real end to their seeing Him again after the resurrection. By the light of the Holy Spirit they would always behold Jesus, until they were permitted to see Him for ever in heaven.

2. *Failure of the disciples to understand our Lord.*—They understood quite well that their Master was about to leave them, and the prospect of parting from Him made them sad. Then He spoke of their seeing Him again, and these words were like a ray of light falling upon their hearts, and sweet consolation mingled with their sorrow. Soon, however, a doubt arose in their minds, and they said one to another: "*What is this that He saith to us: A little while?*" None could answer the question, for no one had understood our Lord's meaning; so they said: "*We know not what He speaketh.*" What was it in our Lord's words that the disciples found so perplexing? . . . Jesus had said: "A little while and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father." Was His return to His Father to be only for a short time? Would He soon come back from heaven?—The disciples could not be sure what He meant. They had often heard Him speak of rising from the dead, but these words had seemed to them obscure, and then they were not thinking about them.

3. *Our Lord's words of consolation.*—Our Saviour noticed that His disciples did not understand, and knew that they would like

to ask Him what He meant; so He graciously forestalled their question, and said: *"Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while and you shall not see Me; and again a little while, and you shall see Me?"* Notice the difference. This time Jesus did not mention going to the Father, for it was precisely that remark which had puzzled the poor disciples. How did He explain what He had said about "a little while"? He did not say: "I am now going to suffer and to die, and my death will plunge you into sorrow." Nor did He explain that He would rise again on the third day, and that His coming back to them would fill them with joy. The disciples could not have borne any mention of the Crucifixion; their horror at it would have made it impossible for them to look forward to seeing their Lord again. No, our Saviour only hinted gently at what was about to happen, and said: *"You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice."* That was all, but it was enough, for now they were prepared for anything. Why should the world rejoice? . . . Because when Christ hung dying on the Cross, His enemies would exclaim with delight: "Now we have done with Jesus; that is the end of His new religion!" Our Lord at once tried to console the disciples by adding: *"You shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."* What did He mean? . . . He meant that after the first little while they would weep and lament over His death; but after the second little while they would rejoice at His resurrection and at seeing Him again; and then the world would lament, but Jesus did not actually say this. Did all these things really come to pass? . . .

4. *Parable.*—The disciples' sorrow was not to last long, for it would soon be changed into joy, and our Saviour made use of a beautiful comparison to teach them this truth. When a woman

becomes a mother, she feels anxiety and pain, but they are soon over, and, as soon as she sees her child, she forgets all that she has suffered, and her motherly heart is filled with happiness. Our Lord told the disciples that it would be the same with them. "*So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.*" When was this to be? . . . The very things that had caused them the deepest sorrow—our Lord's Crucifixion and burial—were to be the causes of their greatest joy. How could that be? . . . Without death there can be no glorious Resurrection, and without the pain of parting no glad meeting again. How long was their joy to last? . . . "*Your joy no man shall take from you.*" How could that be true? Was not our Saviour going to leave His friends again at His Ascension? . . . Yes, of course; but the joy of Easter would be followed by that of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, would come to the disciples and abide with them always, until they entered "into the joy of their Lord." How were our Saviour's words fulfilled? . . .

Questions for Repetition.—What was the disposition of the Apostles at the Last Supper? . . . In what words did our Lord foretell His leaving them and their seeing Him again? . . . What was there in His words that the disciples could not understand? . . . How can we explain what our Lord said about a little while? . . . Why would not our Saviour speak plainly about His Crucifixion? . . . How did He again try to comfort His disciples? . . . Is it true that the Apostles' sorrow made the world rejoice, and that their joy made the world grieve? . . . Why could no one take away from the disciples their joy at our Lord's Resurrection? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) In to-day's Gospel Jesus revealed to His disciples both the sorrow and the joy that they would feel. We see how everything lay open before His

eyes. What do we mean when we call our Lord omniscient? . . . How did Christ display His omniscience at the Last Supper? . . . He knew of the treachery of Judas, and of St. Peter's denial. (b) At the end of the explanation that He gave to the disciples our Lord said: "Your joy no man shall take from you." There is everlasting joy in eternity. What is heaven? . . . Can we form any idea of eternal happiness? . . . Will all men be equally happy in heaven? . . .

2. *Why is not this Gospel read before, rather than after Easter?* . . . It is very well suited to this season. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, will soon take leave of us and go back to heaven. This thought is a drop of sorrow mingling with our Easter happiness. If a dying father says to his children: "I must leave you now, soon you will have no father," will they not be filled with sorrow? They will begin to weep and say: "Father, dear father, stay with us; do not leave us." This was how the disciples felt; and every good Christian shares their feeling to some extent. But our Saviour comforts us by saying: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." *The Good Shepherd comforts His poor little sheep*—this is the chief thought suggested to us by to-day's Gospel.

3. Some day we shall all see Jesus, but, like the disciples, we can reach the joys of heaven only after we have suffered on earth. Does that matter very much? Suffering lasts only a little while and there will be no end to our happiness. Therefore let us suffer willingly, if heaven is to be our reward; let us struggle for it, pray for it and look forward to it. St. John says very beautifully: "Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away" (Apoc. xxi, 4).

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Our Lord Promises to Send the Holy Ghost

Introduction.—Last Sunday we read part of our Lord's farewell discourse to His disciples. When was it uttered? . . . Can you tell me briefly what it contained? . . . To-day's Gospel is taken from the same discourse. What were the feelings of the disciples just then? . . . Our Lord had told them that He was going to leave them, and they were very sad; they did not know what to do. But that was not all, for our Saviour had told them something else: "They will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God; and these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor Me" (John xvi, 1, 2). So the disciples were not only to lose their Master, but they were to undergo suffering and persecution. This seemed too much for them to bear; they lost all courage, until our Lord lifted them out of their state of depression by promising to send them the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

I. Gospel: John xvi, 5-14.

1. Jesus foretells His departure.
2. Jesus gives the reason for His departure.
3. The action of the Holy Ghost upon the world.
4. The action of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.

II. Explanation: 1. *Jesus foretells His departure.*—*"Now I go to Him that sent Me."* Do you understand these words? . . . They mean: "I came from the Father and am going back to Him."

"And none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart." These words contain a gentle reproof. What would Jesus have liked the disciples to do? . . . To ask Him: "Whither goest Thou?" and to wish Him happiness. But their hearts were so full of sorrow that they never thought of asking a question; they could not put aside their gloomy forebodings, but were wondering what would become of them when Jesus was no longer with them. We might almost fancy that they had some secret grudge hidden in their hearts. Our Lord, however, did not mean to distress them by His reproof; He wanted to turn their thoughts into another direction. How did He do this? . . .

2. *Jesus gives the reason for His departure.*—He told His disciples that they had no reason for mourning over His departure, they ought rather to rejoice. What were our Lord's exact words? . . . *"It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you."* Why could not the Holy Ghost come unless Christ went away? It was God's holy Will that the work of redemption should be completed by our Lord's Ascension, before the Holy Ghost came and imparted the graces of redemption. Christ must first go back to His Father, and then the Holy Ghost could begin His work and glorify Jesus. Hence our Lord added: *"If I go, I will send Him to you."* Then follows an account of the wonderful action of the Holy Ghost in the world. Pay great attention, for this is one of the most difficult, but at the same time one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Bible. Read the words over again. . . .

3. *The action of the Holy Ghost upon the world.*—Of what was the Holy Ghost to convince the world? . . . *"Of sin, because they believed not in Me."* What does this mean? The Apostles were

to preach by the power of the Holy Ghost, and many, hearing them, would acknowledge that they had sinned through not believing in Christ, the Messias; and these people would be converted. [The Church of Christ was to accomplish great things through the Holy Ghost. Many would say, however, "Yes, the Christian religion is good and beautiful, and has changed thousands of sinners into saints." Yet they would not believe because they refused to do so. In their unbelief they fall more deeply than ever into sin, and finally are lost for all eternity.] The Holy Ghost was to convince the world *"of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see Me no longer."* This is another difficult passage. Our Lord meant: "The Holy Ghost will convince men that I am just and not a sinner." How was this to be done? By our Lord's Ascension: *"Because I go to the Father;* for although I shall no longer be visible here on earth, I shall continue my wonderful works through you, My Apostles." [Our Lord seems to say: "I shall breathe My Holy Spirit into the Church to be her soul, and then she will accomplish great things in the world. Many of the children of the Church will live just and holy lives, and thus the world will see that I am the Just One, the Son of God, and desire to lead all men to justice.] The Holy Ghost was to convince the world also *"of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged."* These words are even more difficult to understand than the others. The prince of this world is satan, who impelled the Jews to put the Son of God to death, so that all hell triumphed at our Lord's Crucifixion. The exultation was, however, of short duration, since satan had not really overcome Christ, but had himself been conquered. The hour of our Lord's death was that in which the prince of this world was judged. The effects of this judgment were soon seen; satan had gradually to quit the world,

and his works—error and falsehood, sin and idolatry—were little by little to disappear, whereas the dominion of Christ was to extend more and more. All this was to be done through the action of the Holy Ghost, and many, perceiving these things, would acknowledge that there was indeed a judgment, for the prince of this world had already been judged.

4. *The action of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.*—The disciples seem not to have understood our Lord, and this was not surprising. He saw at once that they were perplexed, and so He said: *"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."* The disciples were still like children in the faith and in the Christian religion. Can children in the lowest classes be taught *all* the truths of faith? No, there is a great deal that they would not understand, and we can teach them only the things of chief importance; later on, when they are older, they can learn more. Our Lord treated His disciples like children, so He consoled them by saying: *"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."* How would the Holy Ghost teach the Apostles? . . . Jesus had taught them by word of mouth, but the Holy Ghost was to teach them through their minds. What Jesus had begun, the Holy Ghost was to finish, not all at once, but very gradually. From whom did the Holy Ghost receive all truth? *"He shall not speak of himself, but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak."* From whom does the Holy Ghost hear anything? . . . All truth comes from God the Father, who first sent His Son to begin teaching the Apostles the Christian faith, and afterwards the Holy Ghost was to come and instruct them further. Was the Holy Ghost to announce quite new truths? Jesus said: *"He shall glorify Me; because He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it to you."* The Holy Ghost would only explain and de-

velop and complete the teaching of Christ. Just as a seed contains a whole plant in itself, so did our Lord's teaching contain all the truths of Christianity; the Holy Ghost was not to teach anything but the doctrines of Christ, and there can be no higher or better religion than the one taught by Him.

Questions for repetition.—What made the disciples very sad? . . . In what words did our Lord speak of His return to His Father? . . . How did our Lord's words convey a gentle reproof to the disciples? . . . What reason did our Lord give for going back to His Father? . . . What did our Saviour say about the action of the Holy Ghost upon the world? . . . In what way can the Holy Ghost convince the world of sin? . . . of justice? . . . of judgment? . . . How will all this happen? . . . What did Jesus say about the action of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles? . . . In what relation does the teaching of the Holy Ghost stand to the teaching of Christ? . . .

III. Application: 1. This Gospel contains some *important doctrines of faith.*—(a) The disciples were depressed at their Master's departure, for they were thinking more of themselves than of Him. Had they perfect love of Him? . . . When is our love of God perfect? . . . (b) Jesus said: "If I go, I will send Him (the Holy Ghost) to you." Christ had first to return to the Father before He could send down the Holy Ghost. This is an important doctrine. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed? . . . Who is the Holy Ghost? . . . (c) Jesus called the Holy Ghost the Comforter. What graces does the Holy Ghost bestow upon our souls? . . . (d) Christ promised His disciples that "the Spirit of truth should teach them all truth." The Spirit of Truth abides always in the Church of Christ. What graces does it bestow upon the Church? . . . Why is the Catholic Church infallible? . . .

2. *Why do we read this Gospel after Easter?* . . . It is a very good preparation for our Lord's Ascension. To-day, like last Sunday, we read how He spoke of leaving this world, but whereas last Sunday He told His disciples not to be sad, because He was leaving them, to-day He says that they ought to rejoice: "It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you." The chief thought therefore suggested by the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday after Easter is: *The Good Shepherd promises to send the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.*

3. *The Holy Ghost is still our Comforter.*—Life is full of troubles, and no day is quite free from them. If you have not found this out yet, you will soon do so. It is not easy to bear sickness, poverty, temptation and scorn; and we all need comfort. But the Holy Ghost can make everything bearable, and when He helps us, what is bitter becomes sweet, and suffering turns into joy. Think how much St. Paul had to endure, and yet he wrote: "I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (II. Cor. vii, 4). Do not forget the Holy Ghost, your best Friend, though one whom we unhappily often forget and ignore. *The Holy Ghost is still the Spirit of Truth,* and will teach you all truth. It is He who really teaches you your religion, for without Him nothing that I can say would do you any good. I can only give you religious instruction; I cannot give you religion. Do you see now how necessary it is for us all to make use of the light and graces given by the Holy Ghost? You should often say very earnestly: "Come, Holy Ghost!"

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Exhortation to Prayer

Introduction.—This is the last Sunday before the Ascension. What should we expect the Gospel to contain? . . . Our Lord once more urges His followers to pray, and again tells them that He is going away. On the third Sunday after Easter we read that He said: "A little while and now you shall not see me, . . . because I go to the Father." Of course this made the disciples sad, and so He continued, as we read last Sunday, "I tell you the truth: It is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you." Now, on the fifth Sunday, our Lord says quite plainly: "I leave the world and I go to the Father." This Gospel is again taken from the farewell discourse uttered by our Lord before He went out with His disciples to the Mount of Olives.

I. Gospel: John xvi, 23-30.

1. Prayer offered in the name of Jesus.
2. Our Lord's new method of instruction.
3. The disciples' new method of prayer.
4. Whence Christ came and whither He went.
5. The disciples understand Him and believe.

II. Explanation: 1. *Prayer offered in the name of Jesus.*—Our Lord had just been speaking of seeing His disciples again after the Resurrection; the descent of the Holy Ghost was to be the beginning of God's new kingdom and of a new life of prayer. Christ spoke very plainly of this, saying: *"Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you."*

What is meant by asking in the Name of Jesus? . . . It means that you are to ask with confidence in His merits, and then you will obtain everything. As the Father loves the Son, He will certainly give you what you ask. This is why the Church finishes every prayer with the words: "Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son." *"Hitherto you have not asked anything in My Name."* The disciples had often prayed, but not hitherto in the Name of Jesus. Why was this? . . . Because it was impossible. Our Lord must first offer the sacrifice Himself upon the Cross, and return to His Father in heaven, before they could pray in His Name. Then, however, there were to be no more doubts and delays: *"Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."* If you want anything, tell your Father about it in your prayers, and He will certainly hear you, and so your soul will be filled with holy joy.

2. *Our Lord's new method of instruction.—These things I have spoken to you in proverbs.* Why had our Lord spoken in proverbs or parables? He could not speak in any other way, for the disciples would in that case have understood nothing about the great and heavenly truths; as it was, their Master's language often seemed to them obscure and unintelligible. They did not yet possess the light of the Holy Ghost, but all would be different after His coming. *"The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father."* When did this hour come? . . . Jesus meant: "When I speak to you through the Holy Ghost, a light will shine in your minds, so that you will understand all that I have told you about My Father." How long will this light last? The Holy Ghost will always remain with the Church and she will always continue to teach by His help.

3. *The disciples' new method of prayer.*—With the coming of the Holy Ghost a new life was to begin for the disciples, a life

not only of faith but also of prayer. *"In that day you shall ask in My Name, and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you."* After you have received the Holy Ghost, it will no longer be necessary for Me to ask favors for you; you can boldly ask the Father yourselves for what you want, and He will hear you. Why would the Father hear them? *"The Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."* Faith and love unite us most closely with Christ; we are really His members; we are His brothers and sisters, and so we are God's children and favorites. The meaning is, briefly: The Father loves the Son, and the Son loves us, because we believe in Him and love Him; consequently the Father also loves us and will hear our prayers.

4. *Whence Christ came and whither He went.*—Our Lord had now consoled His disciples, who must have been very happy when they heard all that their Divine Master said and promised. They were able then to hear a serious statement, and so He said to them plainly: *"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father."* Why did the Son of God come into the world? . . . He had accomplished His great work of redemption, and was going back to the Father, from whom He had come forth. Such was the holy Will of God, and the disciples were to submit to it humbly, and adore with faith His eternal decree.

5. *The disciples understand and believe.*—What effect had these words of our Lord upon the disciples? All at once a ray of heavenly light seemed to penetrate the darkness of their minds, and with childlike joy they exclaimed: *"Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb"*; they had really understood their Master's meaning, *"Now we know that Thou knowest all things,*

and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee." During the whole evening they had wanted to ask our Lord why He was about to leave them, and where He was going, but their courage seems to have failed them. He, however, could read their hearts, and knew quite well what they wanted to ask. [Our Lord had really answered them twice already, once when He said: "A little while," and again when He told them that it was expedient for them that He should leave them, but the disciples had not understood Him before.] Now the statement was short and clear, and the disciples were astonished; they perceived that Jesus knew everything, and their faith was strengthened as they declared openly: "*By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.*" At last they had properly understood their Divine Master. Might He not well say: "So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known Me?" (John xiv, 9).

Questions for repetition.—How did Jesus teach the disciples and all of us to ask in His Name? . . . How does the Church comply with our Lord's exhortation? . . . What difference was there in our Lord's method of teaching before and after the coming of the Holy Ghost? . . . What difference was there in the disciples' method of prayer? . . . Why may we address our prayers directly to God the Father? . . . How did Christ in a few words remove the doubts of His friends? . . . What effect had these words upon the faith and the feelings of the disciples? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—What truths of faith does this Gospel contain? . . . (a) "If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you?" Whence does our prayer derive its power? . . . Why may and ought we to pray with confidence? . . . (b) "I came forth from the Father." What is the relation of the three Divine Persons to one another? . . .

(c) "I leave the world and I go to the Father." Yet Christ also said: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." How long will Christ remain with His Church? . . . What is the Church in consequence of His abiding presence? . . . The Church is indestructible and infallible; what do those words mean? . . . When does Christ speak through the Holy Ghost in the Church? . . . Are the Pope's decisions also infallible? . . . (d) "Now we know that Thou knowest all things." Jesus can read our hearts, and knows everything. What does that prove about the Person of Christ? . . . That Christ is truly God. We are always discovering this truth over and over again, and it is impossible for us to impress it deeply enough upon our hearts.

2. *Why has the Church chosen this Gospel to be read on this particular Sunday?* . . . Ascension day is close at hand. Our Saviour had been gradually preparing His disciples for His departure. First He said: "Do not be sad, I shall see you again"; then: "You ought to rejoice, for I will send you the Comforter," and to-day: "When I am with My Father, you can ask anything in My Name, and it will be given you; therefore, be glad and ask God for what you want." We, too, ought to prepare for our Lord's departure, and to us, too, He says: "Be glad and ask!" This is the chief point in to-day's teaching, *the Good Shepherd is urging us to pray.* An exhortation to prayer is a very suitable introduction to Rogation week.

3. The practical lesson that we may learn is contained in the words: "Ask and you shall receive." But we must ask in the name of Jesus, and with perfect confidence. We can ask best when we unite ourselves with Christ in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and still more if we become thoroughly one with Him in Holy Communion. These are most precious times of grace.

SUMMARY OF THE SUNDAYS AFTER EASTER

On these five Sundays the Church brings before us the thought of *Christ, the Good Shepherd.*

1. The Good Shepherd gathers His sheep together.
2. The picture of the Good Shepherd.
3. The Good Shepherd consoles His flock.
4. The Good Shepherd promises to send the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.
5. The Good Shepherd tells us to ask God for what we want.

THE SEASON OF PENTECOST

Introduction.—We are entering upon the third part of the ecclesiastical year, in which Pentecost is the chief festival. After our Lord's Ascension the Apostles remained together, awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost. "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus" (Acts i, 14). We follow their example; the preparation for Pentecost lasts from our Lord's Ascension to the eve of the great festival, and we continue to think of Pentecost to the end of the Church's year.

What significance has this season in the Church? . . . By dying on the Cross Christ merited all graces for us, but the distribution of them is the work of the Holy Ghost. So during this part of the year we think chiefly of *the action of the Holy Ghost.*

What task is assigned to us Christians at this season? . . . At Easter we rose again with Christ to a new life; now we have to bring this life to perfection. Through the Holy Ghost we ought to become "full of grace," so that we may be ready for our Lord's second coming.

SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

Witness for Christ

Introduction.—This Gospel is again taken from our Lord's farewell discourse. He foretells terrible things that will befall His disciples; the world will hate and persecute them. "If the world hate you, know you that it hath hated Me before you. . . . The servant is not greater than his Master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." To-day's Gospel follows closely upon this prediction.

I. Gospel: John xv, 26; xvi, 4.

1. Testimony of the Holy Ghost to Christ.
2. Testimony of the Apostles to Christ.
3. Christ foretells persecutions.
4. Christ gives the reason of His prediction.

II. Explanation: 1. *Testimony of the Holy Ghost.*—The disciples were plainly alarmed when our Lord told them that they would be hated and persecuted. What must they have thought and said to one another? . . . "If they have not believed our Divine Master, in spite of having witnessed His miracles, how will they ever believe us? Our Lord quieted their fears by saying that the Holy Ghost would come and give testimony of Him. *"When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of Me,"* How was the Holy Ghost to give testimony of Christ? . . . The Church was to grow rapidly through the action of the Apostles, who were the instruments of the Holy Ghost.

This wonderful extension of Christianity would cause many to believe Christ to be the Son of God, the long-promised Messias. In this way many would believe in Him through the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

2. *Testimony of the Apostles.—"And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning."* How were the Apostles to give testimony? . . . They were to preach Christ crucified all over the world, and lay down their lives for Him, and so bear witness to all men that He is the Son of God. They could bear witness to this fact, because they had been with Him constantly for three years, seeing and hearing all that He had done and said. Many would believe in Christ on the Apostles' evidence. These were consoling promises, but our Saviour had not yet told His followers the whole of the painful truth, and so He returned to the subject.

3. *Christ foretells persecutions.—"These things have I spoken to you that you may not be scandalized."* What had our Lord said to the disciples? . . . He had told them that the world would hate and persecute them, but they were not to be dismayed. He had foretold these things expressly that they might not be scandalized, that is, that they might not be offended at Him, when all those troubles came upon them.

The disciples were now prepared, and their Master went on to tell them the worst things that the future had in store for them: "They will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God." What did our Lord mean by saying that they would be put out of the synagogues? . . . He meant that they would be expelled from the Jewish community, and we read in the Acts of the Apostles that this was really done. Yes, it was regarded as a

good deed to shed the blood of Christians. Think of St. Stephen's death, and remember how completely Saul was blinded by mistaken zeal for God's honor; he was like a wild beast thirsting for blood; but after his conversion, after he had ceased to be Saul and had become Paul, he fared in the same way, and was persecuted almost to death by men of his own race. This was a melancholy prospect for the disciples. Why were they to suffer so much? Our Lord told them the reason: *"These things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me."*

The Jews did not believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and consequently they have gradually lost more and more of the true knowledge of God. Is not that an excuse for putting our Lord to death and for hating His followers? No, for they are to blame for their blindness, and so there is no excuse for them. What Christ then revealed to the disciples caused them a twofold sorrow—they were distressed on their own account and on that of their nation; for now they knew for certain that Israel would not believe and would not be converted.

4. *Christ gives the reason for His prediction.*—Our Saviour was plainly grieved at having to tell His friends all these things, so He tried to soothe their pain by saying: *"These things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them."* He had previously not said anything of the kind to the Apostles; why had He not spoken? . . . He had been with them hitherto, but now He had to leave them. Also they would not have been able to bear such a prospect, and might perhaps have forsaken Him altogether, but now they were prepared and could endure the bitter truth.

Questions for repetition.—To-day our Lord revealed something of the future; what did He tell His disciples? . . . What grain of

comfort did He give them in His sorrowful prediction? . . . How was the Holy Ghost to give testimony to Christ? . . . How were the Apostles to do so? . . . What would the Jews do in their hatred of the Apostles? . . . Why did the Jews hate our Lord and His followers? . . . Why did our Saviour disclose to His friends the trials awaiting them in the future? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) How were our Lord's promises fulfilled? Everything was literally fulfilled in the case of the Apostles, but the promises were to hold good for ever. Let us look back at the history of the Church. Our Lord said: "The Holy Ghost shall give testimony of Me, and you shall give testimony." This took place on the feast of Pentecost, but it is still true, for the Church is always spreading through preaching and the action of the Holy Ghost. Think of the Catholic missions in Asia and America! Persecution has never ceased. In the early Church there were many false teachers, *e. g.,* Arius, and later there was the so-called Reformation. At the present time the Church is being persecuted everywhere, everything conspires to overthrow it, but it will never be destroyed, for it is the work of God. The incessant persecutions prove clearly that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ, and that Christ is the Son of God. (b) It is remarkable that our Lord said: "The Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father." He proceeds equally from the Son; it must be so, for otherwise the Son could not send Him. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed? . . . What is His action upon the Church? . . .

2. *Is this Gospel suitable for Ascensiontide?* . . . Yes, because we are preparing for Pentecost. Our Saviour sums up in it very shortly the work of the Holy Ghost, and His words ought to arouse in our hearts true and firm confidence in the Holy Ghost. We ought

to expect the coming of our heavenly guest, the Giver of grace, just as our Lady and the Apostles did. This is the chief point for us to notice to-day. We have very great need of the Holy Ghost, for the life of every true Christian is and always will be a life of sacrifice; he is often called upon to suffer something for his faith in Christ. But what does it matter if people laugh at us and despise us on account of our faith? Ridicule can do us no harm, but only good. The Holy Ghost can and will make us strong enough to bear everything joyfully and in a Christian spirit.

Let us therefore during the nine days before Pentecost unite in spirit with Mary and the Apostles, and say daily seven Our Fathers that we may obtain the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Let us now at once sing with heart and soul the hymn to the Holy Ghost:

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come
From Thy bright heavenly throne,
Come, take possession of our souls,
And make them all Thy own.

PENTECOST

The Gifts of the Holy Ghost

Introduction.—Christ rose from the dead on the third day. Did the disciples see Him after His Resurrection? . . . It is remarkable that He appeared only to His disciples, not to the people in general, and yet what excitement it would have caused if our Lord had suddenly been seen walking about the streets of Jerusalem or standing in the Temple! No doubt then everyone would have believed in Him; but nothing of the sort occurred. Perhaps you want to know the reason. . . . One of the Apostles had asked our Saviour about it beforehand after the last Supper, when Jesus was uttering His farewell discourse, and had just said: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more, but you see Me; because I live and you shall live" (John xvi, 19). Then St. Jude, the brother of St. James (not Judas Iscariot), said: "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" The Gospel that we read to-day contains our Lord's answer to this question.

I. Gospel: John xiv, 23-31.

This is not an easy Gospel to understand, and we must divide it up and consider each part separately before we can see how it relates as a whole to the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. God's abiding presence in the soul.
2. Knowledge of God through the Holy Ghost.
3. Peace in Christ.
4. Joy with Christ.
5. The "prince of this world" opposed to Christ.

II. Explanation: 1. *God's abiding presence in the soul.*—In answer to St. Jude's question, our Lord said: *"If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him and we will come to him and will make our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words."* At first sight this passage seems difficult. How many things did our Lord say about the man who loves Him? . . . Four things, but of the man who does not love Him, only one: "He keepeth not My words." It is easy, however, to supply the other three statements from what has gone before. . . . Jesus said first: "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him." So in the second case He meant: "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words, and My Father will not love him, and we will not come to him, and will not make our abode with him." Have you discovered what it all means? Why would Jesus show Himself to the Apostles in His glorified body? . . . Because they had loved Him when He was still in His mortal body. Why did He not allow the world to see Him in His glorified body? . . . Because the world had not loved Him. That is the test which will be applied to us all. What must we do if we want to see Jesus in His glory in heaven? . . . We must believe in and love Him in this world. Why did not our Lord after His Resurrection allow the Jews to see Him? . . . Because they did not deserve it. But if He had appeared to them, they would have been obliged to believe in Him; they could not have done otherwise. . . . Yes, but if faith were made so easy that people could not help believing, they would not deserve any reward, far less that God should dwell in their souls and that they should behold Him in heaven. What did our Lord say to St. Thomas? . . . "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed." We have to earn our heavenly reward by means of humble faith. In believing the words of Christ, we are

believing God Himself, for Jesus said: *"The word which you have heard is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."* Faith is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, so it belongs properly to Pentecost.

2. *Knowledge of God through the Holy Ghost.*—These words and those preceding them were not very intelligible to the disciples, who felt some amount of uneasiness in consequence; but our Lord reassured them, telling them that they would afterwards understand whatever seemed to them then dark and difficult. How was the light to come to them? . . . *"But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."* Through the Holy Ghost the Apostles were to learn the whole truth; He would instruct them. This shows us plainly that everything in Holy Scripture relating to our Lord's life and doctrines must be true, for everything was written by the help of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Truth.

3. *Peace in Christ.*—Just before in the words "These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you," our Lord had hinted that He would soon leave his disciples; now He returned to that thought and said: *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you."* As long as He was with them they enjoyed the sweetness of peace, and this was to remain with them after Jesus had gone from them. What a precious inheritance! It was a reflection of the everlasting peace of heaven. *"Not as the world giveth do I give unto you."* The world can only desire peace, but Jesus can really give it. The peace offered us by the world is not true peace at all, but what Jesus gives is the peace of God within our souls; where it exists it is a comfort in sorrow and joy in sadness. Our Lord told us this Himself. What were His words? . . . *"Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid."* When did the Apostles receive

this peace in all its fulness? . . . At Pentecost. This heavenly peace is one of the best gifts of the Holy Ghost, and a token of His love.

4. *Joy with Christ.*—If the disciples thought that they would soon lose their Master and be left alone, might they not well be sad? . . . "No," said Jesus: *"I go away and I come unto you."* Why should you mourn? You have reason for rejoicing rather than for lamenting. Why? Because I am going to enter the glory of My Father. In what words did our Lord say this to the disciples? . . . *"If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."* How could Jesus say: "The Father is greater than I," when at another time He had said: "I and My Father are one"? How do these two sayings agree? . . . There are two natures in Christ, and the former saying refers to His human, the latter to His Divine nature. He was about, as Son of Man, to enter into the glory of the Father. *"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe."* When the disciples no longer saw their Divine Master, they were to believe Him to be with His Father in heaven. This belief would banish all sorrow from their hearts and fill them with holy joy.

5. *The prince of this world opposed to Christ.*—Satan himself was about to assail Christ and tempt Him in His agony. The devil was employing Judas and his confederates as his instruments, and during that very night our Lord would fall into their hands. Yet He said: *"In Me he hath not anything,"* meaning: "The devil cannot take away My life; he has no power at all over Me; but I am laying down My life out of love and obedience to My heavenly Father."

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Who is the Holy Ghost? . . . From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed? . . .

(b) Jesus said of the Holy Ghost: "He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." How do we know that the Catholic Church is infallible? . . . Why is it called the infallible Church? . . .

2. You may feel surprised that to-day's Gospel tells us nothing about the descent of the Holy Ghost. What is the reason? . . . The Gospels contain no account of it, but we read it in the epistle taken from the Acts of the Apostles. (Let us read the epistle for to-day.) But *what has this Gospel to do with Pentecost?* . . . In it we read the promise that was fulfilled at Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down to abide with the Apostles, and with Him came also the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost enlightened the Apostles and made them understand what Christ had taught them; He also brought them Divine peace, so that they could bear anything with joy. Therefore the epistle tells us of the miraculous *descent of the Holy Ghost,* and the Gospel of His *gifts.*

3. The Holy Ghost dwells in every one of you, so that each of your hearts is a little kingdom of heaven. Do you see now how high a dignity every Christian possesses? But listen to St. Paul's warnings: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. iv, 30), and: "Extinguish not the Spirit" (I. Thess. v, 19). You grieve the Holy Spirit by every venial sin that you commit, and you extinguish Him by a single mortal sin. Do you want to treat the Holy Ghost so badly? Will you grieve Him and drive Him out of His sanctuary in your hearts? If ever you have done so, you ought to-day to ask forgiveness, and implore the Holy Ghost to come back and take up His abode with you.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Christian Charity

Introduction.—To-day's Gospel is part of the Sermon on the Mount, and contains instruction regarding Christian charity. Where did our Lord deliver the Sermon on the Mount? . . . There is a hill to the west of Capharnaum called the Mount of the Beatitudes. From it there is a splendid view over the fertile plain and the beautiful Lake of Genesareth, with hills surrounding it. This is where the Saviour sat down with the Apostles at His feet, and lower down the slope were crowds of people, Jews and Gentiles, from all parts of the Holy Land. When Christ began to teach, all listened with deep reverence. Let us, too, listen attentively and reverently to His teaching, and take it well to heart.

I. Gospel: Luke vi, 36-42.

Our Lord's discourse on charity may be divided into four parts:

1. Exhortation to practice charity.
2. Similitude of the blind guide.
3. Similitude of the Master and His disciple.
4. Similitude of the mote and the beam.

II. Explanation: 1. *Exhortation to practice charity.* (a) *"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."* A person is merciful who takes pity on others and does what he can to help them. Why did our Lord utter this admonition? was it necessary? It was at once an old and a new commandment. The Jews used to say: "Love your brethren, the children of Israel; but you need

not love the Gentiles, who are God's enemies." The Pharisees actually taught people to love their friends and hate their enemies; but Christ's teaching was quite different; He said that we must love both friends and enemies in word and in deed. "Be ye merciful." Why should we be merciful? Our Lord tells us Himself: "Your Father also is merciful. Our Father in heaven sends rain and sunshine upon the good and the evil, the grateful and the ungrateful. God's children ought to be like their Father; therefore, "Be ye merciful."

(b) *"Judge not; condemn not."*—Is it always a sin to judge? May not a judge condemn any one? Yes, he has a right to do so, and it is his duty. Parents, too, and teachers ought to judge and punish children for their faults, as otherwise God will punish them. Is it never right to speak of the faults of others? Yes, but it depends upon why we do so. To judge others harshly and for no reason at all is sinful. May we condemn (*i. e.*, damn) others? Never; that is always sinful.

Our Divine Saviour probably addressed this admonition chiefly to the Pharisees, who fancied that they alone were God's own chosen children, and consequently they delighted in despising, judging and condemning others, and especially the Gentiles.

Why may we not judge and condemn? . . . Jesus has told us, that we may not ourselves be judged and condemned. God alone is Judge, and whoever takes pleasure in judging others, often makes mistakes and easily falls into sin. Think of Job's false friends. As St. Augustine says, many a man does wrong with a good intention, and who can judge him but God alone, for no one else can see the hearts of men.

(c) *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*—Our Lord set us an example when He prayed: "Father, forgive them." We Christians

ought to act as He did. A Christian is bound to forgive and forget; to be angry without reason and to keep up a grudge is un-Christian and heathenish.

(d) *Give, and it shall be given to you.*—What did our Lord mean? Give to the poor for God's sake, and then God regards your gift as made to Him. He will restore it to you a thousandfold, for He is generous in paying. Our Lord explained this to His hearers by describing something familiar in their everyday life: *"Good measure and pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom."* Everybody who heard these words understood them at once, but do you understand them? Have you ever seen wheat measured? It is poured into a big wooden measure, which is shaken, so as to be quite full. In the same way will God measure out your reward, which will consist of the happiness of heaven, abundant and unchanging. We give Him what is only temporal and receive in return what is eternal. Which gift is more valuable? Remember: *"With the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."* If you give much, you will receive much; but if you give little, you will get little in return.

2. *Similitude of the blind guide.*—Our Lord inserted at this point a short parable: *"Can the blind lead the blind? Do they not fall into the ditch?"* That is easy to understand. Any one who undertakes to lead a blind man must be able to see where they are going. It would be very foolish for one blind man to lead another. What would happen? . . . Even here it would be dangerous, but in the Holy Land the risks are far greater, for there are frequently deep holes or even open cisterns close by the roadside; the footpaths are narrow and a false step might cause a very bad fall. But what reason had our Saviour for uttering this parable? . . . He had just

before said: "Give, and it shall be given to you." That, of course, applies to giving help in time of need, but still more to assisting those in spiritual trouble or want, for instance by instructing the ignorant or correcting the sinful. Which is worth more, alms for the body or for the soul? . . . Of course charity shown to the soul is more valuable, for the soul is more important than the body. But can anyone instruct others when the eye of his own soul is blind to the truth? Can any one correct his brother whilst his own soul is still in the darkness of sin? . . . This is what our Lord wanted to suggest, especially to His disciples. He was telling them to begin by receiving sight by means of truth and grace, otherwise they would be blind guides to others.

3. *Similitude of the Master and His disciples.*—Christ taught the same lesson in the second little parable: "*The disciple is not above his master.*" He meant: "If you wish to teach and correct others, you must first be masters; pupils copy their teachers, and if a teacher is bad, his pupils can not be perfect."

4. *Similitude of the mote and the beam.*—The same thought recurs in the third parable: "*Why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not?*" There is no difficulty in understanding our Lord's meaning. Can a man, guilty of great sins, find fault with anyone else? If you want to improve others, you must set to work seriously to correct yourself. To what people was our Lord particularly referring? . . . To the Pharisees, who were always ready to judge others harshly, but never thought of trying to improve themselves, although they had great need of amendment. To one of them our Lord addressed the stern rebuke: "*Thou hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.*" But the admonition was in-

tended also for everybody, including the Apostles. Our Saviour had chosen them out and called them to be leaders of the blind and teachers of the ignorant; therefore it was their bounden duty to become better themselves; otherwise they would be blind guides and ignorant teachers.

Questions for repetition.—On what occasion did Jesus teach us these beautiful lessons about Christian charity? . . . What did our Saviour say about being merciful? . . . How did He warn us against rash judgments? . . . What is the meaning of the parable of the blind guide? . . . Of the disciple and Master? . . . Of the mote and the beam? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—To-day's Gospel contains some important practical lessons. (a) Our Lord says: "Be ye merciful." Which are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? . . . Christ will judge us hereafter according to the way in which we have practiced them. What will He say to the good? . . . What to the wicked? . . . (b) "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." How can we sin against our neighbor's honor? . . . What is calumny, detraction, false testimony, rash judgments? How do we sin by any of these? . . . (c) "Forgive and you shall be forgiven." In what words does Christ teach us to love our enemies? . . . (d) Christ compares sins with motes and beams. Are all sins equally great? . . . When do we commit a mortal sin? . . . When do we commit a venial sin? . . .

2. *Why is this instruction on Christian charity read to-day?* . . . On the Sundays after Pentecost the Church draws our attention to the action of the Holy Ghost in Christ's kingdom. The Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost and poured Divine love into our hearts. Now we have to continue in the love of God and walk in the spirit of love, for love of our neighbor is inseparable from true love of

God. Hence we are told to be merciful, not to judge or condemn others, to forgive and to give; so the chief thought for to-day is *charity towards our neighbor in the kingdom of Christ.*

3. Our Lord addressed His instruction to all of us. Does not one point or another in it make you feel uneasy, as if He could see something wrong in you? He said: "Be ye merciful." Sometimes your hearts are hard as stones. You may have had it in your power to do a kindness to some other child, but you did not care to do it. Is that Christian charity? Jesus said: "Judge not." But you have often looked down upon others because of their defects, and perhaps you have spoken ill of them. Is that Christian charity? Jesus said: "Forgive," but you have often avoided having anything to do with others for some trifling reason, and perhaps for weeks have not spoken a kind word to them. Is that Christian charity? Jesus said: "Give." Many poor children are cold and hungry, and you might have given them something; your parents would have had no objection; but you perhaps have thought: "What business is it of mine?" Is that Christian charity? If your conscience reproaches you with any of these things, what is to be done? . . . You must repent and try to do better in future.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Parable of the Great Supper

Introduction.—Our Lord was being entertained by one of the chief Pharisees shortly before His Passion. Other guests, both Scribes and Pharisees, were present, watching Him closely. A man came in, suffering from dropsy, and, in spite of its being the Sabbath day, Jesus cured him by a miracle, and then, noticing that the other people invited chose the first seats at the table, He spoke a parable to them, saying: "When thou art invited to a wedding, sit down in the lowest place." Then, turning to the giver of the feast, He said: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbors who are rich, lest perhaps they invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee; but . . . call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make recompense, for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just." One of the guests exclaimed: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" What made him say this? . . . He was plainly thinking of the future reign of the Messias, and imagining that then one splendid feast would follow another in constant succession. Our Lord taught him a very clear lesson in the parable of the Great Supper.

I. Gospel: Luke xvi, 16-24.

Three classes of guests were invited to the supper, so the Gospel can be divided into three parts, corresponding to the three classes.

1. The guests invited first, who would not come.
2. Poor guests invited.
3. Strangers compelled to come in.

II. EXPLANATION: (a) *The Parable.* 1. *The guests invited first.*—A rich man in the town resolved to give a great supper, and sent out many invitations. When everything was ready he sent his servants to summon the guests. It was the custom among the Jews for guests to receive two invitations, the first some weeks in advance, and the second just before the entertainment. The host himself generally gave the first invitation in person, and a servant the second. Everyone invited promised to come, but at the last they changed their minds and began to make excuses. What excuse did the first man make? . . . *"I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused."* Would he have bought a farm without seeing it? Of course not; but as the spring was approaching, he wanted to tell his laborers how they were to cultivate the fields and plant the vineyards. He could have done that just as well on the following day. What was the second man's excuse? . . . *"I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them."* A yoke means a pair of oxen. The bargain was not completed, for the man had still to try the animals, and see whether they were worth the sum asked for them. In the Holy Land oxen are used for ploughing and threshing. Do you know how corn is threshed there? As soon as it is cut it is strewn on a hard floor, out in the open air, and then two oxen (or asses) are led round and round in a circle until all the grains are trodden out. What excuse did the third man make for not coming? . . . *"I have married a wife, and therefore I can not come."* This was a very poor excuse and expressed rudely; the two others had at least made some apology, but this man did not think it worth while to do so. He

had better have said: "I do not care to come," and then he would have spoken the truth.

2. The poor guests.—How did the host receive all these excuses? . . . He was justly indignant, but what was he to do? His supper was ready, and there were no guests. He thought of a plan, and sent his servant out again, saying: "*Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame.*" The servant knew where to look for such people, and was not long in finding them, and the poor were quite willing to accept so kind an invitation. They had time enough to attend the supper, not being busied, like the others, with worldly possessions. Uninvited they would not have ventured to set foot in the rich man's house, and that was why he told his servant to *bring* them in.

3. *The strangers invited to the supper.*—Very soon a number of poor, miserable people assembled, but they did not fill the hall, and still there was room. The host did not hesitate, but sent his servant out a third time, saying: "*Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled.*" What kind of people formed the third class of invited guests? They were not townsfolk, but strangers who happened to be on the roads or resting in the shade of the hedges. No doubt they were astonished at the invitation, but the servant had instructions to compel them to come in. Perhaps one or two of those originally invited began to regret having made excuses, but now the Giver of the feast was angry and would not admit them, but said: "*None of those men that were invited shall taste of My supper.*" Now let us see what the parable means.

(b) *The interpretation.* 1. *The guests first invited.*—What is the supper of which our Lord was speaking? . . . The supper is

the kingdom of the Messias on earth, the Catholic Church. In it are many kinds of food, viz., Christ's doctrines and the Sacraments, but especially Holy Communion. The rich giver of the feast is God. Who are the invited guests? The children of Israel, who were God's chosen people. God makes no distinction between rich and poor, high and low; He calls all alike to His kingdom; but in the parable our Saviour made a distinction, and mentioned first the rich, aristocratic people and then the poor and despised inhabitants of the town. Why did He do this? . . . He was at a feast with many grand Scribes and Pharisees who regarded themselves as the teachers and leaders of their nation, and expected to be the first in the kingdom of the Messias. But what happened? . . . The Messias came as God's messenger to call them to the feast in His kingdom; and most of them refused to obey His summons and rudely rejected the invitation. Why did they act thus? Because Jesus had said that whosoever would be His disciple, must deny himself and follow Him. The rich people and aristocrats could not endure this doctrine; they cared more for money and lands, and all the enjoyments and amusements of life. Therefore they were altogether excluded from the supper, that is, from Christ's Church.

2. *The poor guests.*—Who are the guests brought in from the streets and lanes of the city? . . . They are the plain, simple people belonging to the Jewish nation, many of whom, though not all, listened gladly to the Messias and followed Him. They thus became guests at the great supper and children of holy Church. Think of the Apostles and disciples! Almost all of them were poor, uneducated men.

3. *The strangers invited to the supper.*—But there was still room at the supper, the kingdom of the Messias was not full, and so

strangers, too, were compelled to come in. Why were they? . . . They were the Gentiles, for not only the Jews were summoned to enter the kingdom of God, but also the Gentiles. They were fetched in from the highways and hedges. What does that mean? . . . It means that people of every country and nation were called by the Apostles, God's messengers, and gradually the supper was furnished with guests. Do you now understand the connection? Some one invited with our Lord had exclaimed: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," meaning to say: "We, the leaders of the people, shall be the foremost also in the kingdom of the Messias." Jesus replied in the parable: "Yes, you are the first persons called to God's kingdom, but you refuse to accept the invitation, and so you shall not taste of My supper."

Questions for repetition.—Why did our Lord compare His Church with a supper? . . . Who is the Giver of the feast? . . . Who is the servant? . . . Who are the guests first invited? . . . Who are the poor guests? . . . Who are the strangers? . . . Why did the Scribes and Pharisees hope for prominent positions in the kingdom of the Messias? . . . What disappointed their expectations? . . . How were they punished for not accepting the invitation? . . . What did Christ mean to teach by this parable? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) A man made a great supper. Theologians regard this supper as a type of Holy Communion, which is a great feast, renewing the memory of Christ's Passion. Why do they regard it thus? . . . Because many refuse to come, and, like the guests at the supper, make all sorts of excuses. What are the words in which our Lord commanded us all to receive Holy Communion? . . . ("Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man," etc.) How often is every Catholic bound to receive Holy Communion? . . . (b) The rich, aristocratic people

in Israel would not listen to the call of grace. What must a man do in order that grace may suffice for his salvation? . . . Is it possible for a man to resist grace? . . .

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . The chief thought suggested to us by the Church during the Sundays after Pentecost is the action of the Holy Ghost. The grace of the Holy Ghost called the Jews first into the kingdom of God, but they did not heed the summons, so the invitation was passed on to the Gentiles, who did listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost, and multitudes of them entered the kingdom of Christ. This Sunday falls within the octave of Corpus Christi, and the contents of to-day's Gospel harmonize well with the festival; so that the chief thought for us to carry away with us to-day is: *The supper of the just in the kingdom of Christ.*

3. We are all even now guests at the great supper, for by the grace of the Holy Ghost we have been made children of the Church. Moreover we are all invited to the feast in heaven; but shall we all be allowed to partake of it? No, certainly not, if we act like the guests invited first. If we care for the things of earth, for eating, drinking and sinful amusements, more than for those of heaven, prayer, going to church, and Holy Communion itself, we shall never be admitted to heaven, and the rich Giver of the feast will say that none of those that were invited shall taste of His supper. Those who are children of the world in this life cannot be God's children in the life to come.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Groat

Introduction.—To-day we hear two more parables uttered by our Lord, both full of consolation for poor sinners. The first is the parable of the lost sheep; the second that of the lost groat. On what occasion did our Saviour make use of these parables? The time was drawing near for Him to set out on His last journey to Jerusalem. Do you remember His prophetic words that we read on Quinquagesima Sunday?: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man." Our Lord was still on the further side of the Jordan, in the region called Perea, and as that was on the border of the country, there were many publicans or tax gatherers there, who were hated by the people, for many of them were dishonest and they oppressed and cheated the inhabitants. In the opinion of the Pharisees, publicans were the worst sinners, although they were certainly no worse than the Pharisees themselves, and they thronged to hear our Lord's teaching.

I. Gospel: Luke xv, 1-10.

1. The Pharisees' complaint against our Lord.
2. Parable of the Lost Sheep.
3. Parable of the Lost Groat.

II. Explanation: 1. *The Pharisees' complaint against our Lord.*—Christ had perhaps again entered a publican's house as his guest; at any rate there were many publicans present, and our Lord welcomed them with kindness and sympathy, which pleased them

and speedily won their hearts. But there were also Scribes and Pharisees present. Why had they come? Were they anxious to save their souls? No, certainly not. Perhaps they were glad to see so many of the lost sheep of Israel returning with contrition to the Good Shepherd? No, all that they wanted to do was to watch our Saviour. They may have hoped to hear Him sternly rebuke the people about Him, but they heard nothing of the kind, for He was associating with these people as if they were His friends. This sight infuriated the Pharisees. How did they give vent to their annoyance? . . . They murmured, saying: *"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."* Why did they make this a ground of complaint? They meant that whoever associated with sinners must be a sinner, and so Christ could not be the Messias. Thereupon our Lord taught them a lesson in two parables. Let us first consider each parable itself, and then its interpretation.

2. *The lost sheep.* (a) *The parable.*—We have here a scene taken from the pastoral life of the Holy Land, where the flocks graze mostly on the rough mountain heights, in which there are many caves, or on the desert plains, where agriculture is impossible owing to the poverty of the soil. It often happens that a sheep strays away from the flock, and cannot find its way back, for a sheep is a helpless sort of animal. Sometimes a lost sheep is entangled in the brambles, and, when this is the case, it either starves to death or is eaten by wolves. The shepherd may not notice his loss until he leads the flock to the sheepfold at night. Does he then abandon the sheep to its fate? Only a bad shepherd would do so; a good shepherd is more concerned for the lost sheep than for the rest of the flock. He sets out at once and crosses hills and valleys, examining every cave and thicket; he calls the sheep by its name, and tries to induce it to come to him, and if he succeeds in finding it,

he is very glad; he does not punish it or drive it in front of him, but he caresses it, lays it across his shoulders and carries it home or to the sheepfold. His heart is so full of joy that he calls the other shepherds in the neighborhood together and tells them how anxious he has been, and how tiring a task it was to go after the lost sheep, saying: *"Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost."*

(b) *The interpretation.*—Our Lord Himself explained the parable by the words: *"I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance."* Who is the lost sheep? . . . A poor sinner has strayed from the right path and is entangled in sins. He cannot deliver himself, and would inevitably perish if the Good Shepherd did not care for him. God follows with His grace the poor lost sheep, calling him, so that His Divine voice penetrates the sinner's heart; He does all that He can to save the perishing soul. At last the sinner repents and does penance, and God's fatherly heart is filled with joy and all heaven rejoices. But does God *really* care more for one penitent than for ninety-nine just people? No, our Lord did not mean that, but the greater the previous sorrow, the more intense is the subsequent joy. In this picture of the shepherd you will recognize at once another Good Shepherd—Jesus Himself. With loving solicitude He went after the lost sheep of Israel. How kindly did He welcome all poor sinners, in order to save them from destruction! Do you think that the Pharisees understood the parable? . . . You surely can understand it quite well. . . . Our Saviour's meaning was this: "I came to seek and to save sinners; why do you therefore reproach me for being friendly with publicans?" The same lesson is taught in the next parable.

3. *The lost groat.* (a) *The parable.*—We have here an account of a little incident in everyday life. A woman, perhaps the wife of a poor peasant, had ten groats or drachmas. A drachma was a silver coin of about the same value as a denarius, and worth rather less than twenty-five cents. Ten drachmas would not be a large sum of money, but the woman regarded them as a fortune; perhaps they were her dowry that she had hoarded up in case of need. She would have taken good care of it! Women and girls in the East are fond of wearing strings of coins round their necks or on their heads, and apparently the same custom existed in the time of Christ, so that one coin might easily be lost. One drachma is not much, but to a poor woman it seemed a great deal. No wonder that she at once lighted a candle—in cheaply built houses it was dark even in the daytime—and went on looking for the coin until she found it. Of course she told all her friends and neighbors about it, for joy is increased when it is shared with others.

(b) *The interpretation.*—Our Lord explained this parable also by saying: *"I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."* The lost coin is a type of a sinful soul. The holy angels mourn over a sinner, but when he repents and returns to God they are happier than the woman when she found her money. Our Lord implied that of course He was glad when publicans and sinners came to Him. Could He despise and repel them as the heartless Pharisees did? He did not come to judge, but to save sinners.

Questions for repetition.—What made our Lord utter these two parables? . . . What becomes of a lost sheep? . . . How does a shepherd show his love for the sheep? . . . How did our Saviour display His love for sinners? . . . What lesson does He teach us in the parable of the lost groat? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—The parable of the lost sheep shows us three things very plainly: (a) the misery of a sinner. What are the consequences of mortal sin? . . . (b) The love of God, who by means of His grace seeks the sinner and draws him back from a state of sin. Is actual grace necessary for us? . . . (c) The mercy of God, who receives a poor sinner lovingly. What do we mean when we call God merciful? . . . What graces does God impart to us in the Sacrament of Penance? (d) In the parable of the lost groat our Lord says that the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner. What do the good angels feel towards us? . . .

2. *What is the connection between this Gospel and the ecclesiastical year?*—Is there anything in to-day's Gospel about the action of the Holy Ghost? . . . It was by the grace of the Holy Ghost that we became members of Christ's flock. We can never be thankful enough for this favor; but nevertheless many a sheep runs away from the flock and loses its way, so that it cannot return and is in danger of falling a prey to the enemy of our souls. Who can save a poor sinner? . . . Only the Holy Ghost and His grace. He goes in search of the sinner and tries to obtain admission to his heart. It is His greatest delight to find the lost sheep and carry it back to Christ's flock, and bring it to Jesus, the Good Shepherd in heaven. The chief thought to remember to-day is *the return of the sinner to the kingdom of Christ.*

3. Here is a serious question for you all to consider: Have any of you ever escaped from the fold and lost your way in the wilderness of sin? What would have become of you then without the Holy Ghost? If you had died in your sins, where would your unhappy soul be? Perhaps there is among you at this moment a poor lost

sheep; if so, it must not remain outside the fold, but must release itself as quickly as possible from the sins that are like brambles, holding it fast. This release is obtained in the Holy Sacrament of Penance.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Miraculous Draught of Fishes

Introduction.—To-day's Gospel brings before us a very beautiful and important event—the miraculous draught of fishes. It was one of our Lord's first miracles, and took place on the Lake of Genesareth (also called the Sea of Galilee and the Lake of Tiberias). This lake lies nearly 700 feet below the level of the sea and is about 20 miles in length; its breadth varies, being in some places as much as 10 miles, and it is very deep. The water is fresh and good to drink, and abounds in fish. At the time of our Lord the whole region was most beautiful and fertile, and a ring of hills, dotted over with towns and villages, surrounded the lake. At the present day few traces remain of its ancient beauty. Our Saviour was standing on the shore, probably near Capharnaum, and people came from all directions, crowding round to hear the Divine Teacher. The Gospel tells us what took place ther.

I. Gospel: Luke v, 1-11.

1. Our Lord teaching the people from the boat.
2. The miraculous draught of fishes.
3. St. Peter at the feet of Christ.

II. Explanation: 1. *Our Lord teaching the people from the boat.*—Let us picture to ourselves the scene. The sun had just risen, and by the shore were two boats, one belonging to St. Peter, and the other to Zebedee, the father of St. James and St. John. St. Peter and his companions were cleaning their nets before hanging them up to dry in the sun. They were probably rather de-

pressed; why? . . . Soon, however, they grew more cheerful, for they caught sight of their Divine Master, around whom a great crowd had assembled, begging Him to give them some instruction. Our Saviour could not resist their entreaties, but on the flat shore He saw no spot suitable for speaking; what was He to do? Jesus was never at a loss; He got into St. Peter's boat, and told him to push off a short distance from the land, and then, sitting down, He began to teach the multitude. All could see and hear Him quite well. What a charming scene! Our Saviour and His disciples were in the boat, lapped by the water of the lake, and on the shore stood crowds of people, listening eagerly to all His words.

2. *The miraculous draught of fishes.*—Now let us look at the second picture. The instruction was over, and we do not know what our Saviour had said; the crowd was beginning to disperse slowly, when Jesus said to Simon: "*Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.*" Why were they to launch out? Because, as a rule, only very small fish are caught close to the shore; large fish are found in deeper water, so that any one wishing to catch them must cast his net further out. Simon, however, had no wish to resume work and said: "*Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing.*" Night is the best time for catching fish, for then the large ones come to the surface. On this occasion the disciples had toiled in vain, and in bright sunshine the fish can see the nets, and so they remain deep down. Consequently the prospect of catching any was very poor, but still St. Peter was willing to make the attempt: "*At Thy word I will let down the net.*" What was the reward of his childlike confidence and obedience? . . . The net soon began to grow heavy, and the fishermen pulled it with all their might, seeing to their amazement that it was full of fishes. The boat was soon full, too, and yet there were more.

What were the fishers to do? . . . *"They beckoned to their partners, that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them."* The second boat seems still to have been moored near the shore, but James and John, seeing the signal, rowed as quickly as they could, and soon their ship, too, was filled; in fact both boats were so heavy as to be in danger of sinking. It must have been a wonderful event!

3. *St. Peter at the feet of Christ.*—Now we come to the third picture. What impression did the miracle make upon St. Peter? . . . He was seized with holy awe for a great light had just flashed into his soul, and he saw clearly who Jesus really was. He could not restrain his ardent nature, and in humble adoration cast himself at his Divine Master's feet, saying: *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."* Simon's companions were equally filled with awe and reverence, but they were less impetuous and gazed at our Saviour in silent astonishment. He calmed St. Peter by saying gently: *"Fear not,"* adding these very significant words: *"From henceforth thou shalt catch men."* . . . He had said something very similar once before, when calling Simon and his brother Andrew to be His disciples. His words then were: "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men" (Matth. iv, 10). Do you understand now why our Lord worked this great miracle? . . . The draught of fishes was to be a type of the multitudes of human beings whom St. Peter was to bring into the Church of Christ. When did the Apostle cast out his net for the first time to catch men? . . . At the first Pentecost, when more than 3,000 entered the net, for 3000 were baptized and admitted into the bark of Peter, the holy Catholic Church. There was, however, another reason why Christ worked this miracle. Hitherto His disciples had not always been with Him, but still followed their usual occupa-

tions from time to time. From that moment they abandoned everything, home and family and means of livelihood, and followed Jesus.

Questions for repetition.—What circumstances caused our Saviour to teach the people from the boat? . . . What did Jesus tell St. Peter to do when the instruction was over? . . . Why was there, humanly speaking, a very poor prospect of catching any fish? . . . How did St. Peter receive his Master's command? . . . How was the Apostle's confidence rewarded? . . . What effect had the unexpected abundance of fish upon Simon and his companions? . . . How did St. Peter both by word and deed display his faith and reverence? . . . How did Christ reveal to St. Peter his future mission? . . . What practical result had this miracle? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) St. Peter's boat is a type of the Church, and just as Christ was in the boat, so is He always in the Church. In what words did He promise always to remain with the Church? . . . Peter steered his boat on the lake, and he still steers and directs the Church, of which he is the visible head. From which of our Lord's words do we know this? . . . Who has been the head of the Church since St. Peter's death? . . . (b) The great draught of fishes was a type of the rapid growth of the Church. The Church of Christ must be Catholic. Why is our Church plainly Catholic? . . . (c) Jesus said to St. Peter: "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." Our Lord's words had a wonderful effect, for He is Lord of nature. What do we mean by calling God almighty? . . . (d) What virtues did St. Peter display? . . . His Divine Master had only to say a word, and he obeyed like a child. He threw himself at Jesus' feet, and then he left everything to follow Him. What great faith, humility and love!

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical*

year? . . . It is closely connected with last Sunday's Gospel, in which we read how Jesus, the good Shepherd, goes to seek the lost sheep. He wants to save our immortal souls, and the Church continues His work by the aid of the Holy Ghost. To-day a similar thought is presented to us. St. Peter is to catch men in order to save them, and the Church continues St. Peter's work by the aid of the Holy Ghost. The chief thought for this Sunday is that *souls are gathered by the Church, the Kingdom of Christ,* like fish in a net.

3. Trusting in Jesus, Peter let down the net and caught many fish. We, too, ought to trust Jesus in all that we do. All must be *with* God—with His grace, and *for* God—for His honor. You can be rich with God, though poor as beggars, for every good work, however small, is recorded in the book of life. But a very rich man is poor if he has not the grace of God in his heart and does not refer all his actions to God. When such a man comes to die, he will have to acknowledge with sorrow: "I have labored all the night of my life on earth, and have taken nothing." He will appear before God with hands empty of all merit, and empty he will be sent away. Therefore in all that you do, you should keep your eyes fixed on God, and try to do everything for His sake, and in accordance with His Will.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

True Justice

Introduction.—You all know our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Where was it delivered? . . . (Cf. 1st Sunday after Pentecost.) It is a short compendium of Christian doctrine. Christ began by uttering the eight beatitudes. Can you say them? . . . Then He spoke of the dignity and duties of the apostles in two beautiful similes: "You are the salt of the earth." "You are the light of the world," and then follows a serious and impressive instruction on true justice, which is the passage selected for to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: Matth. v, 20-24.

1. Jesus condemns the justice of the Pharisees.
2. Jesus explains the Fifth Commandment.
3. Jesus requires reconciliation.

II. Explanation: 1. *Jesus condemns the justice of the Pharisees.*—Our Lord brought forward a serious charge against the Pharisees and all who resemble them, saying: "*Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.*" What is meant by justice? We are told of St. Joseph that he was a just man; he observed all God's commandments faithfully, and God's Will in all things was his will. Could that be said of the scribes and Pharisees? In their own eyes they were models of justice, but their justice was hypocritical, and all their religion was external, having no inward value, but being like a nut with no kernel. Hence our Lord applied to them the words of the prophet Isaias: "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Matth. xv, 8).

I will give you a few instances of their behavior: The Pharisees were careful to pay tithes of their crops, but they did not hesitate to extort the last farthing from poor people and widows. They used to make offerings towards the maintenance of the Temple, and yet allowed their parents to starve, not regarding their action as at all unjust. Once the Pharisees saw our Lord's disciples eating without having first washed their hands, and asked Jesus why they did so (Mark vii, 5), considering it a great offence; but they did not think it wrong to cherish hatred and enmity in their hearts.

What do you think of this kind of justice? Jesus said: "You Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity" (Luke xi, 39). Yes, they made what was unimportant the chief thing, and what was of the greatest importance they overlooked. This was why our Lord said sternly that they would not enter the kingdom of heaven. The Pharisees observed the letter, but not the spirit of the law; they troubled a great deal about the exact words and not at all about the meaning. Our Lord wanted to show us how we ought to interpret the Commandments, and so He proceeded to explain the fifth of those given by God.

2. *Jesus explains the Fifth Commandment.*—*"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment."* You can easily understand these words. . . . God had proclaimed on Sinai: "Thou shalt not kill," and the Pharisees accordingly caused murderers to be tried, respecting only the literal sense. Is actual murder the only sin forbidden by the Fifth Commandment? . . . No, it forbids many other sins, some of them mortal sins. This was what Christ intended to teach the people.

"But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall

be in danger of the judgment." Of what judgment was our Lord speaking? Every little town in the Holy Land had its own local court of justice, subordinate to the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem, with power to inflict fines and corporal punishment, particularly scourging, that was very painful. Who was liable to be brought before this court? Christ said whoever was angry with his brother. He was expanding the Fifth Commandment and declaring unjust anger to be a sin, and no trifling one. The Pharisees had never thought there was any harm in it. Our Lord continued: "*Whoever shall say to his brother 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council.*" The Sanhedrim or Council was the highest court of justice amongst the Jews. It was concerned especially with offences against religion, and the penalty imposed was generally death by stoning. Who deserved this punishment? Jesus declared that any man who said "Raca" to his brother deserved it. What does "Raca" mean? It was a term of abuse, and meant "good for nothing." Therefore, if a man's anger were not restrained, but broke out openly into abusive language, that man deserved to be put to death. This sin is of course worse than the former, but again it was a matter to which the Pharisees paid no attention.

Our Lord went a step further and said: "*And whosoever shall say 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire.*" For very serious offences the Sanhedrim had power to give a terrible sentence; the criminal was to be burnt to death in Gehenna, which was a wild ravine outside the walls of Jerusalem. It was there that in the past little children had been sacrificed to the false god Moloch. At the time of Christ rubbish and refuse were burnt in Gehenna, which was regarded with horror by the Jews as a type of hell. Who deserved to be thrown into the fires of Gehenna? Our Lord said: "Whoever shall say, 'Thou fool.'" But is it so dreadful a thing to

call a person a fool? Not with us, but in the Jews' language the word meant an accursed outcast, abandoned by God. If, therefore, anyone applied so abusive an expression to his brother, he committed a mortal sin and deserved the punishment of death. You see how important brotherly love is in God's sight. The Scribes and Pharisees must have been amazed at this doctrine, which involved a totally new interpretation of the law.

3. *Jesus requires reconciliation.*—Our Saviour went on at once to apply this new doctrine to ordinary life. Supposing a man wanted to offer a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remembered that he had quarrelled with his brother: *"Leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother."* You see how God cares less for the offering than for the heart, that must be filled with the spirit of sacrifice. What follows from this? If we want to be reconciled with God we must first be reconciled with one another. We cannot be at peace with God as long as we are quarrelling with our neighbors. If we refuse to forgive them, God cannot forgive us. The lesson that Jesus taught was that it is a sin to keep up a grudge and to cherish angry feelings against others in our hearts.

Questions for Repetition.—What did Christ say about the pretended justice of the scribes and Pharisees? . . . Why were our Lord's words fully justified? . . . In Christ's interpretation of the Fifth Commandment, what difference can we see between His doctrine and that of the Pharisees? . . . What does our Saviour say about secret anger? . . . About angry words? . . . About abuse and cursing? . . . What illustration does Jesus use to teach us that even secret anger makes us displeasing to God? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) According to the Pharisees it was a sin to do harm to one's neighbor, and they

were right. How can we sin against our neighbor's life and person? . . . According to Christ's interpretation we are strictly forbidden to wish any harm to our neighbor. Does the Fifth Commandment forbid only evil actions? . . . (b) Christ wants us to love one another and to live in peace. What is ordered by the Fifth Commandment? . . .

2. *What is the place of to-day's Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . We have been sanctified by the Holy Ghost; now it behooves us to live a holy, Christian and moral life, regarding which the next few Gospels teach us various lessons. The principle underlying all morality is justice. This was recognized in the Old Testament, but the ancients lived according to the letter of the law; we Christians ought to live according to its spirit. The chief thought to-day is *Justice in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. You see how our Saviour explained the Fifth Commandment. Have you always been careful to observe it? Or have you perhaps for weeks kept up a grudge or angry feelings against others? Have you abused your brothers and sisters or your school fellows? Have you ever cursed them in your anger? Is the poison of anger still in your heart? If so, what do you mean by saying: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us?" Does not your conscience tell you that you are a liar? How can you go to church with anger in your heart? How can you receive Holy Communion? Away with all anger, it is unworthy of a Christian. Pray earnestly now: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Second Miraculous Multiplication of Loaves

Introduction.—On the fourth Sunday in Lent we read in the Gospel of the multiplication of the loaves. Where did our Lord work that miracle? . . . How many loaves were there at first? . . . How many people were fed? . . . To-day's Gospel contains an account of another similar miracle which took place in the third year of our Lord's public life; the scene of it was again the neighborhood of Bethsaida, on the northeast shore of the Lake of Genesareth. No sooner did our Saviour show Himself in this region than all the inhabitants went out to see Him, carrying with them many sick people, and others who were dumb, blind and lame. Jesus cured all who were brought to Him, "so that the multitudes marvelled seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, and the blind see; and they glorified the God of Israel" (Matth. xv, 31). It was no wonder that the crowds remained with Jesus for three days, and were not tired of hearing His instructions; but meantime their provisions failed, so Jesus worked a miracle to relieve their necessities.

I. Gospel: Mark viii, 1-9.

1. Our Lord's compassion on the multitude.
2. The disciples' anxiety.
3. The miraculous supply of bread.

II. Explanation: 1. *Our Lord's compassion on the multitude.*—The people had been out in the wild, barren country for three days. Perhaps you wonder where they slept at night? . . . In the East no one troubles much about shelter for the night, nor wants a soft, warm bed. A man simply wraps himself in his large

cloak and lies down on the earth, and sleeps in the open air. But you may be thinking: "Had they had nothing at all to eat for three days?" . . . Probably they had taken a small stock of provisions with them, and had not expected to be so long away from their homes, so the food that they had brought with them was all eaten. Why did they not go home sooner? . . . They were all full of enthusiasm for Christ, because of His miracles and teaching. They preferred to starve rather than miss hearing His discourses, and our Saviour was delighted with their zeal, yet at the same time He was sorry that they were hungry, and He would have been still more grieved if some of them had fainted on the long journey back to their homes. We see this expressed in the words: *"I have compassion on the multitude."* What did He then say to His disciples? . . . He plainly intended to test their faith and confidence.

2. *The disciples' anxiety.*—What answer should we have expected the disciples to give? . . . "Lord, Thou canst do all things; speak but one word, and we shall have bread." But they said something quite different: *"From whence can anyone fill them with bread here in the wilderness?"* How strange! It was not a year since the first miraculous multiplication of loaves, and they were again in the same district, and yet they acted as if they had completely forgotten it. They were again full of anxiety, as they had been before, and did not know what to do. They were still very weak in faith and confidence, and yet, weak as they were, they were soon to be the pillars of the Church of Christ. How much did they require power from on high, the strength bestowed upon them by the Holy Ghost!

3. *The miraculous supply of bread.*—When man's need is greatest, God is most ready to help. The wonderful miracle was repeated in almost the same way as before. The people again had

to sit down in groups. What provisions had they still left? . . . Seven loaves and a few little fishes; that was not much for four thousand people! Our Saviour again gave thanks and blessed the food, and ordered it to be distributed to the multitude, all of whom ate and were satisfied. This time, too, there was a good deal left over—seven baskets full. I think that Jesus displayed His love and care for the people by causing so much to be left over. Many had a long way to go; some as far as Tiberias, and it would take them five or six hours to reach home, so our Saviour seems to have intended them to take a little food to eat on the road. Then He sent them away.

Questions for Repetition.—Where did the second multiplication of loaves take place? . . . How did the people show their affection for Jesus? . . . How did our Saviour display His sympathy with them? . . . What proves the disciples to have been still wanting in faith? . . . What points of likeness are there between the first and the second miraculous multiplication of loaves? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) The simple people in Galilee were never tired of listening to Christ's instructions. Their zeal ought to put to shame many Christians who pay no attention to the word of God, although it is our duty to hear it. Ought we to be satisfied with hearing just Low Mass on Sunday? . . . (b) "I have compassion on the multitude." We see from these words how kind our Lord was; He desired nothing but to do people good in body and in soul. What do we mean by saying that Jesus is kind? . . . He is in this respect an example to all Christians. Are we always kind? . . . (c) Jesus worked a miracle to feed thousands of people; He performed one of the works of mercy—to feed the hungry. We ought to try to follow His example. Which are the corporal works of mercy? . . . Our Lord

regards every charitable action that we do, as if it were done to Himself. He said: "Whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ; Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark ix, 40).

2. *What is the connection between to-day's Gospel and the rest of the ecclesiastical year?* . . . The Gospels in this part of the year all contain important teaching about how a Christian ought to live. Last Sunday we were taught to be just. Whoever wants to be just, seeks first the kingdom of God, so he must take pleasure in hearing God's word. Jesus Himself told us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His justice." The multitude that followed Him into the desert did this; but He went on to say: "All these things shall be added unto you." To-day's Gospel shows us how this promise was fulfilled. The people sought only food for their souls, the word of God, but they received besides food for their bodies. The Gospel teaches us, too, to trust in God's providence; this is the chief thought: *Divine Providence in the kingdom of Christ.*

3. Let us for a moment look back at the past. Ages before there had been something not unlike the miraculous multiplication of loaves—I mean the manna in the wilderness. If we look forward there is something else to notice—the multiplication of loaves was a type of the Bread of Heaven in Holy Communion. Let us compare these three gifts of God with one another. (a) The people of Israel in the desert had no food and were in great distress; so God took pity upon them and sent them manna down from heaven. To-day we have again seen a multitude starving in the wilderness until Jesus took pity upon them and gave them bread to eat. We, too, are in a wilderness, for sin has turned the world into a desert, but our Saviour takes pity upon us and gives us the Bread of Heaven in Holy Communion. How poor and wretched we should be with-

out it, and how rich and happy we are with it! See how merciful God is! What return do we make Him? We sin again and again; what shameful ingratitude! (b) The manna was a wonderful kind of food; it fell miraculously every day for forty years. So was the bread in the wilderness wonderful, for the few loaves were miraculously increased over and over again. But the bread of Holy Communion is much more wonderful, for by the priest's words the substance of bread is changed into the true Body of Christ, and this takes place daily on our altars. (c) All ate of the manna; some thanked God and others murmured. All ate of the bread that the Lord's hand had blessed and multiplied; some believed and were true to Jesus, others soon after denied Him. We all are allowed to receive the Bread of Angels in Holy Communion; some are full of love, others are indifferent; some receive it with joy, others with repugnance; some receive it worthily, others unhappily are unworthy. To which class do you intend to belong?

"Bad and good the feast are sharing,
Yet what diverse dooms preparing,
  Endless death or endless life.
Life to these, to those damnation;
See how like participation
  Is with unlike issues rife."

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

False Prophets

Introduction.—On the fifth Sunday after Pentecost we saw our Lord on the Mount of the Beatitudes. Where is that? . . . To-day we read another Gospel taken from the Sermon on the Mount; it contains a warning against false prophets. A number of important doctrines preceded this warning: "Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?" "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you." "Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction." Then comes to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: Matth. vii, 15-21.

1. Behavior of false prophets.
2. Signs by which to recognize false prophets.
3. Punishment of false prophets.

II. Explanation: 1. *Behavior of false prophets.*—Our Lord began by describing the behavior of false prophets. *Beware of false prophets.* The word prophet means teacher, and the ordinary teachers among the Jews were the priests, whose duty it was to expound God's law and to instruct the people. Did Jesus intend to warn men against prophets of this kind? . . . No; they were appointed by God and were therefore true prophets. From time to time God had sent special prophets to teach His people, e. g., Elias, Isaias and Jeremias. These holy men foretold the coming of the Messias, but their chief duty was to instruct, admonish and warn the people. Surely Christ was not warning His hearers against

such prophets as these? . . . No, they were sent by God, and were therefore true prophets. What sort of prophets did our Saviour mean? . . . Undoubtedly He was referring to the Pharisees, who were not commissioned by God, and so their teaching was not God's word at all. They were false prophets, interpreting God's commandments according to their own fancy. They were teachers not of truth, but of falsehood; they misled the people instead of guiding them rightly.

What are these false prophets like? . . . Our Lord said: *"They come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."* A sheep is by nature a quiet, gentle creature, that never hurts anyone; but a wolf is a fierce, cruel beast, that attacks even human beings when it is hungry. This comparison is very applicable to the Pharisees and to all false prophets. Why? . . . They come in the clothing of sheep, that is to say, they look good and pious, as if they were innocent lambs, but they are not to be trusted, for under their pleasing appearance is the savage nature of a wolf; they are inwardly full of falsehood and wickedness, and desire to mislead and ruin others.

2. *Signs by which to recognize false prophets.*—Many are deceived by false prophets, and so our Saviour gave us a test which is quite infallible. *"By their fruits you shall know them."* Just as we recognize a tree by its fruit, so we can tell whether a prophet is true or false if we look at his works and see whether they are good or bad. Our Lord chose an instance from nature to illustrate what He had just said: *"Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"* Everyone knows that no grapes grow on a hawthorn, nor figs on thistles, that abound in the Holy Land. Just as vain would it be to look for true goodness in a false prophet. *"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth*

evil fruit." Nothing else is possible. And the same thing is true of a man: he is known by his works. False prophets may disguise themselves for a time and deceive others, but not for long, and it will soon become manifest that they are trying to satisfy their own evil passions, ambition, greed or lust. Even if a wolf were to put on sheep's clothing, it would not be difficult to distinguish him from the sheep, as he could not hide his eyes, jaws and claws, all of which would betray him.

3. *Punishment of false prophets.*—To prevent people from being led astray our Lord made known the end awaiting false prophets. What is their punishment? . . . "*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire.*" A bad tree is fit only to be burnt, for why should it occupy the ground to no purpose? False prophets and their followers are like evil trees, and so they will end in the fire, where they will burn for ever, but never be consumed.

There can be no doubt that our Lord's words made a deep impression upon all who heard them, especially as He added very solemnly: "*Not every one that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of My Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" What does this mean? . . . Not every one who says, "Lord, I believe in Thee, I love Thee, I worship Thee," will be saved. No, God looks at works rather than words, at actions rather than speeches, and at the heart rather than the lips. The way to eternal life is to have faith, and to live according to that faith.

Questions for Repetition.—Against what prophets did Christ warn the people? . . . Why did our Lord call the Pharisees false prophets? . . . How do false prophets try to hide their real nature? . . . What is an infallible test by which we may recognize false

prophets? . . . By what comparison did our Lord illustrate the truth of His words? . . . What punishment awaits false prophets? . . . In what words did Christ teach us very plainly that nothing but a life of faith can lead us to heaven? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) "Beware of false prophets." The warning is applicable to every age, for all who teach what is wrong are false prophets. What false and heretical teachers have you heard of? . . . What false doctrine did Arius teach about Christ? . . . How did Luther's teaching contradict the Catholic faith? . . . Whoever believes a false prophet sins against faith. How can we sin against faith? . . . (b) "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire." This is true of us all. Is every Christian bound to do good works? . . . (c) Christ said: "Not every one that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Luther taught that men can be saved by faith alone, and that there is no need of good works. In what words does St. James refute this false doctrine? . . . When is our faith living? . . . Is it enough for us to believe all that God has revealed to us? . . .

2. *What is the connection between this Gospel and the rest of the ecclesiastical year?* . . . Two Sundays ago we were taught to walk in justice in the Lord's sight. The same thought recurs to-day. Faith is the foundation of a Christian life. "The just man liveth by faith," therefore "beware of false prophets," who might destroy your faith. When a man's faith is undermined, the whole edifice of his Christian way of life totters and is in danger of falling, and this may cause him to forfeit life everlasting. The chief thought brought before us to-day is: *There are false prophets in the kingdom of Christ.*

3. False prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, are to be found everywhere. All who lead others astray, and not only heretics, belong to this class. One man may make fun of prayer and Confession, and mock at those who go to church and fast. Another may tell his companions horrible stories and say: "There is no sin in it; others do the same thing." One child may induce another to miss Mass on Sunday. All these are savage wolves, and it is against such that our Saviour bids us beware. Beware especially of friends who flatter you, but do not really desire your welfare; they only want to make you do wrong and to ruin you. It may easily come to pass that you and your false friends may be cast into the fire!

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parable of the Unjust Steward

Introduction.—Do you remember the parables of the lost sheep and the lost groat that we read on the third Sunday after Pentecost? . . . Our Lord uttered them shortly before His last journey to Jerusalem, when He was in the country east of the Jordan. About the same time He told His disciples two other parables—those of the Prodigal Son and the Unjust Steward. We read the latter in to-day's Gospel. We are told expressly that this parable was uttered by our Lord *to the disciples,* thus many people heard it besides the Apostles; no doubt there were Pharisees present, and probably also publicans and sinners.

I Gospel: Luke xvi, 1-9.

1. Dismissal of the unjust steward.
2. The steward's cleverness.
3. Praise of the clever steward.
4. Our Lord's teaching.

II. Explanation: (a) *The Parable.* 1. *Dismissal of the unjust steward.*—The parable is taken from ordinary life. A rich man had a great estate, part of which was cornland and part olive gardens. As it was impossible for him to superintend everything himself, he employed a confidential steward, whom he trusted implicitly to look after his estate. What was the steward's business? . . . He had to let out the fields and olive plantations and collect the rent yearly. As a rule the rent was not paid in money, but in kind; that is to say, part of the produce was handed over to the landlord, or rather to the steward, who sold the goods and had to account to his employer for the money that they fetched. If the

steward were not honest and conscientious, it would be easy for him to cheat his master, as the man did in the parable, who was most likely an extravagant fellow, needing much money to gratify his taste for luxury. Hence he oppressed the tenants, requiring of them more than the regular rent, and they in their turn, tried to get too much out of the soil, and diminished its value. The master heard of what was going on, and the steward *was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.* The charge was true, and so the owner called him and said: *"Give an account of thy stewardship,"* and at once ordered him to lay down his office, because he had so shamefully abused the confidence placed in him; *"Now thou canst be steward no longer."* The steward was not, however, dismissed on the spot, but continued to hold his office until the accounts were all settled.

2. *The steward's cleverness.*—The man had sustained a severe blow, and he was about to be thrown out of work into poverty. What was he to do? *"To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed."* What did he mean by digging? . . . Working as a day-laborer. Why could he not dig? . . . His hands were unaccustomed to hard work, and he had no strength for it. And as to begging! A man who had held an honorable position could not turn into a beggar! No, that would be too great a humiliation; better die than beg. But how was he to live? He had a brilliant idea, and determined to put it into execution in the short time remaining to him. What did he do? . . . He made friends with his master's debtors, calling them one after another. The first owed the landlord a hundred barrels of oil. A barrel holds nearly nine gallons, so the whole debt was over 880 gallons. The steward at once diminished the debt by half, saying: *"Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty."* The second debtor owed a hundred quarters of wheat, and the

steward remitted a fifth of this amount, saying: *"Take thy bill and write eighty."* No doubt he treated other debtors in a similar way.

3. *Praise of the clever steward.*—The landowner could not help admiring the steward's cleverness. *"The lord commended the unjust steward, for as much as he had done wisely."* But how could his master praise him? Would you not expect him to be indignant at the man's dishonesty? The master did not praise the steward for mismanaging his property, nor for acting dishonestly, but only for his cleverness in dealing with the debtors. A man is called clever who knows how to get on in the world, and the steward understood that very well, for he had provided himself with friends and helpers in his time of need.

4. *Our Lord's teaching.* (b) *Interpretation of the Parable.*—Do you think that Christ meant us to go and act like the unjust steward? . . . No, that would be wicked. Our Lord only meant us to learn to be wise too. He said: *"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."* Who are the children of light? . . . They are those who possess the light of truth and live and walk in it; this light shines before us on the way to heaven. The children of this world are those who live only for it and care nothing for the world to come; they walk in the darkness of sin now, and some day will be cast into eternal darkness. The unjust steward was a child of this world; he enjoyed life every day, eating and drinking, gambling and making merry, as if he were to remain for ever on the earth. But how could our Lord call the children of this world wiser than the children of light? . . . They understand better how to secure evil things than the children of God know how to get what is good; they are more eager to obtain earthly possession than others are to enjoy the good things of heaven. What admonition do our Lord's words contain? . . . They tell the

children of God to learn wisdom from the children of the world. Our Saviour went on to apply this admonition to what He had just said of the unjust steward. *"I say to you, make unto you friends of the Mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."* Mammon means riches, and when our Lord speaks of the Mammon of iniquity He means riches acquired by wrong and sinful means. Many people get rich unjustly, and riches lead many into wickedness. No doubt Jesus had an object in saying this. Many wealthy publicans were present, and some of His own followers were well off, and it behooved them all to be wise like the steward and gain friends with their riches. But what sort of friends? The poor and their guardian angels, and also Christ Himself, for He had said: "So long as you did it (*i. e.*, a kindness), to one of these my least brethren, you did it unto Me" (Matth. xxv, 40). What reward comes to us from making such friends? . . . When we die, these good friends will welcome us to our heavenly home. Can money then actually obtain us admission to heaven? Yes, in this way: Suppose a sinner does many works of charity, and in return for them God gives him many graces; the poor sinner may be converted, even on his deathbed, and go first to purgatory and then to heaven.

Questions for repetition.—Of what dishonest actions was the steward in the parable guilty? . . . What was the punishment for his bad management of his master's property? . . . Why did his dismissal cause him so much annoyance? . . . How did the steward show his cleverness? . . . How far did the steward's behavior deserve praise and recognition? . . . What lesson did our Lord attach to the parable? . . . In what respect are the children of the world wiser than the children of light? . . . How ought a true Christian to show his wisdom? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) The steward in the parable possessed much worldly wisdom, but we Christians ought to possess Christian wisdom, which is a great virtue. What is Christian wisdom? . . . (b) Jesus said: "Make unto you friends of the Mammon of iniquity." It is the duty of every Christian to give alms and to help the poor in body and in soul. What good works are particularly recommended in Holy Scripture? . . . What are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? . . . (c) Christ has told us that we shall be judged according to our works of mercy. What will be the sentence given at the last day?

2. *What connection is there between to-day's Gospel and the ecclesiastical year?* . . . By God's grace we are children of His kingdom, and as such we are bound to make the best possible use of all His gifts. Everything is intended to be a means whereby we can earn admission to heaven, or lay up wealth in heaven. This is the only true wisdom. Even the children of this world can teach us wisdom. So the chief thought to-day is: *The children of Christ's kingdom ought to learn something from the children of this world.*

3. God is infinitely rich, and He wants us all to be His stewards. He has given you many good gifts; bodily gifts (such as sight, hearing, speech, health), and mental gifts (such as reason and free will), besides many graces, and especially the Holy Sacraments. If He were now to call you and say: "Give an account of thy stewardship," would you be alarmed? Would you be able to say calmly: "Lord, I am ready?" I think you all have good reason to pray God to forgive you for having been bad stewards of His gifts and graces. Resolve to do better in future, and often to remember that some day you will be required to give an account of your stewardship.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem

Introduction.—The events of which we read to-day took place quite at the end of our Lord's life. You remember what we heard on Palm Sunday. Jesus was on His way from Jericho to Jerusalem, and spent the Sabbath with His friend Lazarus at Bethany. Early on Sunday morning He set out towards Jerusalem, and sent two of the disciples on to Bethphage. What were they to do there? . . . They soon returned with a she-ass and her colt, and after spreading a cloak upon the back of the latter, they set Jesus upon it, and then our Saviour began His triumph. The disciples round Him formed His guard of honor, and they were joined by a crowd of people coming from all directions, and crying: "Hosanna." At this point the Gospel for to-day begins.

I. Gospel: Luke xix, 41-47.

1. Jesus wept over Jerusalem.
2. Jesus lamented over the city.
3. Jesus prophesied its destruction.
4. Jesus punished those who desecrated the Temple.

II. Explanation: 1. *Jesus wept over Jerusalem.*—Our Lord had nearly reached the city, and was descending the slope of the Mount of Olives, when suddenly He halted. Before Him lay the valley of Josaphat, and beyond it, sparkling in the rays of the morning sun, was the holy city, dominated by its magnificent Temple. At the present time there is a little Franciscan convent at the spot where Jesus stopped, and on the wall is a stone inscribed with the words *Dominus flevit,* the Lord wept. When were Christ's eyes

filled with tears? We hear of another occasion, and that was when he stood by the tomb of His friend Lazarus. Then, too, it is recorded that Jesus wept (John xi, 35). Love and sorrow forced Him to shed tears then, but why did He weep at a moment when all around Him were filled with joy and exultation? Was He thinking of His own approaching passion and death? No; that was not the reason; but in His mind He saw a terrible scene—the holy city in ruins, the Temple desecrated and destroyed, and the children, who loved Him and delighted to be His escort, lying dead, stained with their own blood. It was at this spectacle that Jesus wept; His tears were those of love and pity.

2. *Jesus lamented over Jerusalem.*—Our Lord could not refrain from expressing His sorrow: *"If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes."* Why did Christ make this triumphal entry into Jerusalem? . . . He wanted to reveal Himself solemnly as the Messias, that all might believe in Him, and be converted, and so be reconciled with God. There was still time, though soon it would be too late. This day of Christ's triumph was the last day of grace for His own nation, but most of the Jews were utterly blinded and refused to have anything to do with their Messias, and consequently the punishment that God threatened to inflict upon them became inevitable. Our Saviour knew this, and grieved over it, as a good father would mourn over the ingratitude and misery of his children. This sorrow was the cause of our Lord's lamentation and tears.

3. *Jesus prophesied the destruction of the city.*—Our Saviour made one last attempt to induce the people to turn to Him. He saw the day of God's vengeance approaching and said: *"The days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat*

thee flat to the ground and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone." All this was literally fulfilled, and the Romans were the instruments used by God to effect this destruction. Only 37 years afterwards, in 70 A. D., Titus marched against Jerusalem with an army of 80,000 men. The Jews from the whole country fled to the city, and Titus did not prevent them, but then he built a wall all round the town and shut it in, so that the inhabitants were caught in a trap, and could not get out. Famine and pestilence soon began their deadly work, and within ten weeks 120,000 people died. Outside the city long rows of crosses were seen, on which Titus put his prisoners to death; sometimes as many as 800 suffered in one day. The Jews centred their last hopes upon the Temple, which they regarded as an impregnable fortress, but it, too, was overthrown. A soldier hurled a burning torch into it, and soon the whole building was in flames. The roaring of the fire and the victorious shouts of the Romans mingled with the groans of the dying and the lamentation of the priests. A horrible massacre began, and numberless Jews were killed. Six thousand who had taken refuge in the Temple perished in the flames; many priests actually flung themselves into the fire, and the whole of Mount Moria seemed to be ablaze. Titus wanted to force his way into the Most Holy Place, but was driven back by a great cloud of smoke; and finally of the magnificent Temple nothing was left but heaps of ruins and ashes. Our Lord's prophetic words had indeed been fulfilled; not a stone was left standing. And why was all this? *"Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."* The Messias visited His people, but they would not listen to His warnings and offers of grace. He who refuses to hear must be made to feel.

4. *Jesus punished those who desecrated the Temple.*—We have

just been thinking of our Saviour weeping over Jerusalem, but to-day's Gospel shows Him to us also full of righteous anger. On the evening of Palm Sunday He went back to Bethany, but He was again in the Temple on the following morning. What sight attracted His attention? The Temple was surrounded by a great open courtyard, in which were hundreds of dealers offering for sale animals for sacrificial purposes; a number of money changers, too, had set up their booths there, so that foreigners might change their money. Thousands of pious pilgrims thronged every part of the outer court of the Temple, for the Pasch was close at hand, and the noise of the people buying and selling, and jostling one another, made the whole place like a market. The high priests and the Sanhedrim took no notice, but our Saviour was indignant at the disturbance going on so close to the holy building. Filled with righteous anger, He exclaimed with a loud voice: "*It is written: 'My house is the house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of thieves*" (Is. lvi, 7). Then He overthrew the stalls and tables of the dealers and money changers, and drove the whole rabble from the sacred precincts. No one dared to resist Him, and an overpowering, unseen force compelled those who were desecrating the Temple to withdraw. "*And He was teaching daily in the Temple.*" For how many days? . . . Thenceforth His enemies were determined that He must die.

Questions for Repetition.—What caused our Lord to shed tears in the midst of the joyful crowd? . . . What made Jesus lament at the sight of Jerusalem? . . . What punishment did Christ say would come upon the holy city and the Jewish nation? . . . How was our Lord's prophecy fulfilled? . . . What aroused His just anger on the following morning? . . . How did He rebuke the shameful behavior of the multitude? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Jesus shed tears of love over Jerusalem; He was human, as we are, and the misery of His nation grieved Him deeply. He foretold the terrible doom awaiting Jerusalem, for He was also God, and the future lay open before Him. What do we believe about Christ? . . . What do we mean by saying that He is omniscient? . . . What other prophecies did Jesus utter? . . . (b) For the last time Christ called upon the people to repent; He had waited long for their repentance, because God does not desire the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his way and live (Ezech. xxxiii, 11). Why do we call God merciful and long-suffering? . . . The Jews did not hear the last call of grace, but remained stubborn and impenitent. This was a sin against the Holy Ghost. What are the six sins against the Holy Ghost? . . .

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . Last Sunday we learnt that we ought to make a good use of God's gifts; to-day we are taught not to misuse God's graces. What caused the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation? Misuse of God's grace. This ought to be a warning to us; God offers us His grace, but does not force us to accept it, yet whoever refuses it, will be lost. God is not to blame for that. The chief thought for to-day is: *Curses and blessings in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. Our Lord said in anger: "My house is a house of prayer." Our churches are much holier than the Temple, because Christ dwells in them. How do you behave in church? Suppose Christ were to come out of the tabernacle, how would you feel? Keep all worldliness and nonsense out of the church, for otherwise Christ will have to punish you instead of blessing you from the tabernacle.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Pharisee and the Publican

Introduction.—The wonderful parable of the Pharisee and the Publican was uttered by our Lord in the Temple. Who heard it? We do not know with certainty, but some Pharisees must have been present, for at the beginning of the Gospel we read: *"To some who trusted to themselves as just and despised others, He spoke this parable."* Now the Pharisees were people of this sort; they talked a great deal about religion, but had very little of it in their hearts; they thought themselves just, and fancied that God's all-seeing eye could hardly detect a trace of sin in them, but they looked down upon others with scorn, and regarded the publicans especially as great sinners. It was for this reason that our Saviour gave them a reproof in this parable, that they probably understood quite well and did not forget.

I. Gospel: Luke xviii, 9-14.

1. The Pharisee's prayer.
2. The Publican's prayer.
3. Our Lord's criticism.
4. The lesson taught by the parable.

II. Explanation: (a) *The Parable.* 1. *The Pharisee's prayer.*—Our Lord generally chose the subject of His parables from every-day life. He did so on this occasion. *"Two men went up into the Temple to pray."* The Temple was on Mount Moria, which is not the highest point in Jerusalem, but as a valley lay between it and the city, it was necessary to climb a hill up to the Temple. The first man was a Pharisee? What did his whole behavior

show? . . . That he was full of pride. In his self-assurance he took up a prominent position in the Temple, as if he were a model of sanctity, placing himself where everybody could see him. His pride displayed itself still more in his words, which enable us to see his very nature. What did he say? . . . *"O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican."* This was the first part of his prayer. He thanked God, but he did so only to praise himself, and he never thought of his sins; in fact he did not think that he had any; he said that he was not an extortioner, nor a cheat, nor an adulterer, nor a bad man, like the publican. He perceived nothing wrong in himself, but plenty of good qualities. *"I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess."* This was the second part of his prayer. The Jews were bound to observe only one strict fast in the course of the year, but the Pharisee fasted twice a week. They were required to give to the Temple a tenth part of the produce of their land, but he paid a tenth of all that he possessed. Were these not good works? . . . Of course they were, but it was a mark of intolerable pride to boast of them before God. This was all that the Pharisee said; his whole prayer consisted of praise of himself and contempt of others.

2. *The Publican's prayer.*—Now let us look at the publican. Who were the publicans? . . . They had to collect the taxes and then pay a definite amount to the government. There was much opportunity for dishonesty and oppression in their business, and so they were generally hated by the people, and especially by the Pharisees. Many publicans, however, were less obstinate than the hypocritical Pharisees. Let us see how the publican behaved. He was a model of humility, *"standing afar off."* He did not venture, like the Pharisee, to approach the holy place, but, thinking himself un-

worthy, he remained at the back, near the entrance of the Temple. *"He would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven."* The Pharisee in his bold self-reliance looked up to God, the publican, conscious of guilt, looked down, being ashamed of and sorry for his sins. *"He struck his breast."* His real sorrow and contrition forced him to give some outward expression to his inward feeling. What was his prayer? . . . *"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."* It was a short prayer, but it meant a great deal, and in it we see nothing but humility, not a trace of pride. He knew himself to be a poor sinner, but he relied upon God's mercy. The publican was quite unlike the Pharisee.

(b) *The Interpretation.* 3. *Our Lord's criticism.*—It is very easy to understand the lesson taught in this parable; but, lest there should be the slightest doubt about it, our Saviour added: *"I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other."* I suppose you all know what our Lord meant. The proud Pharisee thought that he had no sins, and so remained in them; God did not forgive him. The publican with humble contrition called himself a poor sinner, therefore he went home freed from sin, because God had forgiven him. You see from this how much God loves humility and hates pride.

4. *The lesson taught by the parable.*—This is stated plainly by our Lord in the words: *"Everyone that exalted himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."* That is to say, if any one thinks himself good and fancies that he has no sins, God will humble him now and in the future; *now,* by withdrawing His grace from the sinner, and *in the future* by excluding him from heaven. But if any one thinks himself to be a poor sinner, God will raise him up now and in the future; *now,* by giving him grace and pardon, and *in the future* by admitting him to

heaven. This lesson is applicable to us all, and not only to the Pharisees, for, as St. James says: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (James iv, 6).

Questions for Repetition.—Why did Christ say: "Two men went *up* into the Temple? . . . What sort of disposition did the Pharisee's behavior and prayer reveal? . . . How did the publican's actions show his humility? . . . What did Christ say about the two men? . . . On what general principles did our Lord base His opinion? . . . What is the chief lesson taught us in this parable? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—We may learn several very practical lessons from this parable. (a) The Pharisee was pride personified. When do we sin through pride? . . . Why is pride a grievous sin? . . . To what sins does pride lead? . . . (b) The Pharisee formed a bad opinion of the publican without sufficient reason; thus he sinned. When do we sin by suspecting others without cause and by rash judgment? . . . (c) The Pharisee boasted of his fasting and almsgiving, but his good works had no value and bore no fruit. What does God regard chiefly about our good works? . . . What is meant by having a good intention? . . . (d) The publican was humility personified; everything about him showed that he was humble. What is true Christian humility? . . . The publican's prayer was humble. When are our prayers humble? . . . (e) The Pharisee had no idea that he was a sinner; the publican was full of contrition for his sins. What is meant by being truly contrite? . . .

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . The Holy Ghost has made us children of God's Kingdom, so we ought to live and behave like God's children, and be just and holy. We ought not to be hypocrites pretending to be good,

like the Pharisees, nor ought we to do good works in order that other people may see and praise them, but in order to please God. Away, therefore, with all pride, for it comes from the devil and leads back to him. We must be humble in all our thoughts, words and works. The chief thought for us to carry with us to-day is that *humility is the foundation of Christ's Kingdom,* and no one can lead a truly Christian life who is not humble.

3. Among Christians there are some who are like the Pharisees, and say: "I say my prayers and go to church; I do not rob or cheat others; therefore I have no sins, and no one can say anything against me." They consider themselves virtuous with scarcely a sin on their conscience; but they should take to heart our Lord's words: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Surely none of you would boast in this way; but is there not a trace of Pharisaical pride in your hearts? Some children think a great deal of themselves and are always ready to look down upon others. They forget that God has given them all their advantages of body and mind. How can anyone be conceited about God's gifts? Away with such stupid pride! If ever it tries to creep into your hearts, cast it out as if it were a thief, who has come to rob you of your heavenly reward. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, our great example of humility, and do not forget to say that beautiful little prayer: "O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like to Thine."

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Cure of a Deaf and Dumb Man

Introduction.—We read to-day of a miracle worked by our Lord in the third year of His public ministry, when He was in Phoenicia, outside the boundaries of the Holy Land. The Phoenicians were famous as traders, their chief cities being Tyre and Sidon, both on the Mediterranean Sea (look at the map). Near Sidon a pagan woman from Canaan ran after Jesus, calling out: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David! My daughter is grievously troubled by a devil" (Matth. xv, 22). Our Saviour did not at once grant her request, but she did not cease imploring help, and at last He said: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." When she reached home she found the girl cured. From Sidon there is a road leading into the region of Decapolis, where are ten towns, all near the Jordan. One is Caesarea Philippi; for what is it famous? . . . King Alexander the Great gave these towns to his soldiers after they had served their time in the army. At the time of Christ they were nominally subject to the Romans, but enjoyed some amount of freedom, and were united in a league. It was in this district that our Lord cured the deaf and dumb man.

[If necessary, something may be said here on the subject of organic disease, and regarding the pitiable condition of deaf mutes.]

I. Gospel: Mark vii, 31-37.

1. Supplicants to Jesus.
2. Cure of the deaf and dumb man.
3. Effect produced by the miracle.

II. Explanation. 1. *Suppliants to Jesus.*—The same thing happened wherever Jesus went; people brought to Him all who

were sick and miserable, and they did so in a region where most of the inhabitants were pagans. *"They bring to Him one deaf and dumb."* Why did they bring him? . . . The poor man knew nothing about our Lord, for he could neither hear nor speak, but others, his relatives or friends, looked after him, and *besought Jesus that He would lay His hand upon him.* This was a strange request; why did they want our Lord to lay His hand upon the man? They must have seen or heard that other sufferers had been cured by Christ in this way. He was not a stranger in that part of the country, for we know that He had delivered a man from an unclean spirit in the neighborhood of Gerasa (Mark v), and the first miraculous multiplication of loaves had taken place not far away. No doubt a report of it had spread to Decapolis, and very probably many, who had actually witnessed it, were with Jesus when He cured the deaf mute.

2. *Cure of the deaf and dumb man.*—The people did not appeal to Jesus in vain; He was ready to help them, but did not wish to do so publicly, so He took the man apart from the multitude. What may have been the reason for this? . . . Our Saviour came primarily to His own nation, it was only in exceptional cases that He worked a miracle for a Gentile; hence He did not wish this miracle to attract attention. Is it not strange that our Lord made so many preparations for this miracle? What was the object of them? . . . The deaf and dumb man did not know what was going to happen, so our Saviour indicated it to him by signs. By putting His finger into the man's ear, He showed that his ears were to be opened; by touching his tongue with spittle, He told him that his tongue should be loosed, and by looking up to heaven He explained to him that help would come from above. Then He spoke one word—*Ephpheta*—"be thou opened," and the miracle took place.

"*Immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed.*" This was a double miracle; why? . . . Jesus did not only cure the defective organs of speech and hearing, but the man was able at once to speak and to understand what he heard. We all learnt to speak when we were children, but this man did not require to learn, for *he spoke right.* We can imagine how earnestly he thanked our Saviour.

3. *Effect produced by the miracle.*—Our Lord then dismissed the people after He had "*charged them that they should tell no man.*" Why were they to tell no one? Was it a secret? . . . I have already told you that Christ did not want to excite the people, but the man who had been cured and his friends could not conceal their joy and astonishment. No sooner had they left our Lord than they began to tell everybody what had happened. Can we blame them? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Thus in a very short time the news of the great miracle spread over all the country round; how did the people express their admiration? . . . By saying: "*He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.*" These words remind us of a passage in Isaias: "Say to the faint-hearted: 'Take courage and fear not, behold your God will bring the revenge of recompense, God Himself will come and will save you.' Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Is. xxxv, 4-6). There can be no doubt that many of the people, who witnessed this great miracle, believed in Christ.

Questions for Repetition.—Where was the miracle of which we read to-day performed? . . . How did the suppliants show their confidence in Jesus? . . . Why did our Lord not want the miracle

to be widely known? . . . What preparations did Jesus make for curing the deaf and dumb man? . . . How was this a double miracle? . . . What effect had our Lord's command to be silent about the miracle? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Our Lord could have cured the man by saying just a word, but as usual He connected the miracle with some outward tokens. In the same way He has connected the grace of the Sacraments with outward and visible signs. What is a Sacrament? . . . (b) Our holy religion is rich in beautiful, symbolical ceremonies. What are the most important ceremonies at holy Baptism? . . . at Confirmation? . . . at Holy Mass? . . . (c) The cure of the deaf and dumb man is a type of holy Baptism, for the priest treats the infant to be baptized very much as Christ treated the man. He touches the child's ears and nose with spittle, saying the significant word, *Ephpheta,* be thou opened. In Baptism the Holy Ghost imparts strength to the soul, so that a baptized Christian can have the right faith, lead a good life and finally be happy in heaven. (d) Before working the miracle our Lord looked up to heaven praying and sighing. He wanted to set us an example, for we ought to ask humbly for every one of God's graces and gifts. "God will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi, 13).

2. *In what connection does this Gospel stand with the ecclesiastical year?* . . . At one time we were all deaf and dumb in our souls, but at our baptism the Holy Ghost cured us of our malady, and the grace of baptism opened our ears and loosed our tongues, so that now it is our bounden duty to hear the truths of Christianity, to keep them in our hearts and confess them with our lips. The chief thought for to-day is *Baptismal grace in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. Let us now all together renew our baptismal vows and say: "O God, through Thy tender mercy when I was a feeble infant I was cleansed from sin by baptism, born again in Thy likeness, sanctified by Thy grace and admitted to Thy Church." . . .

[An admonition may be added to the effect that we ought not to make a bad use of hearing and speech, which are precious faculties given us by God.]

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Good Samaritan

Introduction.—One of the most beautiful parables is that of the good Samaritan. Under what circumstances was it uttered? Our Lord was not far from Jericho, in the Jordan valley, and was setting out for Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the Jewish harvest thanksgiving festival. He was following the road on which the events described in the parable were represented as taking place. Shortly before He had sent out His disciples in twos to preach and heal the sick in the villages round about. They soon returned full of joy and saying: "Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy Name." Jesus replied: "Rejoice not in this that spirits are subject to you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven" (Luke x, 20). Then follows to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: Luke x, 23-37.

1. Jesus calls the disciples blessed.
2. A lawyer asks how to be saved.
3. The parable.
4. Jesus answers the lawyer.

II. Explanation: 1. *Jesus calls the disciples blessed. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see."* Why did our Lord call His followers blessed? . . . Many kings and prophets in Israel had longed for the Messias; how happy they would have been if they had seen him! Like aged Simeon they would have exclaimed in their joy: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy

salvation." With what delight would they have listened to the words of eternal life spoken by His lips! But they all passed away without seeing the Messias; and the disciples enjoyed what had been withheld from the prophets. Therefore our Lord called them blessed, but they deserved the name not so much because they saw and heard him, but because of their faith.

2. *A lawyer asks how to be saved.*—A lawyer had heard what Christ said to His disciples, and at once felt jealous, asking himself: "Why does this man call only his own followers blessed? Why am I not blessed too? I should like to be saved." Se he asked our Saviour a question: *"Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?"* Was he really anxious about his salvation? No, he only wanted to test our Lord and find out whether He adhered to Holy Scripture in His teaching. Jesus perceived his motive, and asked him a question in return: *"What is written in the law? How readest thou?"* The lawyer had his answer quite ready. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbor as thyself."* This was quite correct, so our Lord said: *"Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live."* The lawyer was for a moment embarrassed, knowing that Jesus had perceived his bad intention in asking the first question. So, to get himself out of the difficulty, he asked something else: *"Who is my neighbor?"* This was a very common subject of debate amongst the Jews. Our Lord gave the answer in the parable.

3. *The Parable.* (a) *"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers."* The man may have been a pilgrim or a trader. Why did our Lord say that he went *down?* . . . Jericho lies about 3,300 feet lower than Jerusalem (cf. Quinquagesima Sunday), and it takes six or seven hours to walk from one town to the other. Beyond Bethany, which is reached in about

one hour from Jerusalem, the road zigzags down into the valley, through which flows the stream called the Apostles' brook, the only water seen on the whole journey. The traveller then enters a desert, and in all directions sees nothing but bare rocks, hollowed by the torrents of the rainy season, and bleached by the sun's heat. In summer all is dry and parched; the wayfarer is not cheered by the sight of any flowing water, nor of any trees or flowers; there is no sign of life, and everything suggests death. Occasionally he encounters a few Bedouins, half-civilized children of the desert. The intense loneliness is most oppressive, and even at the present time the route is dangerous, for the Arabs are robbers, and anyone travelling alone is sure to fall into their hands. The poor man in the parable fell among robbers, who deprived him of everything, even of his clothing, and after wounding him, left him lying half dead by the wayside. This is the first part of the story.

(b) In the second part we see a priest, and then a Levite coming along the road. They were probably on their way home after having served in the Temple. They saw the unhappy man, one of their own nation, lying wounded, but their hearts were cold and with no more feeling than a stone. They probably said to themselves: "Why should I stop here? I may possibly fare in the same way, I had better make haste home." So both went past and took no notice of the poor man, although they were servants of God, and bound for that reason to set an example of charity. Jesus did not say one word against them; why? . . . Because everyone can see that they acted uncharitably.

3. Now comes the third part of the story. A Samaritan was travelling along the same road, *"and seeing him, was moved with compassion."* Jews and Samaritans were always at strife, and perhaps at the first moment the Samaritan may have felt some of his

old resentment for a Jew, but pity triumphed over anger. He did not waste any time, but dismounted from his mule or ass, and did what he could to relieve the sufferer; *"he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine."* He had taken oil and wine with him as food for the journey, but he knew that they were both excellent remedies for wounds, so he mixed them together, and washed the sores, and then bandaged them with strips of linen. Then, wrapping the poor man in his own cloak, he set him upon his beast and took him to the nearest inn. There is still an inn halfway between Jerusalem and Jericho; it is now called the Good Samaritan's inn (Chân Chadrur). To this place the good man brought the wounded traveller; he provided him with a bed and strengthening food, and once more dressed his wounds. But even then the Samaritan's charity was not exhausted. The sick man was penniless, so the Samaritan paid the innkeeper for two days' lodging in advance; by that time he would be on his way back from his business journey to Jericho, and would call to see how things were going on, and pay anything extra that might be required. This is the end of the parable.

4. There was no need to interpret the parable; anyone can understand it at once. The lawyer had asked: *"Who is my neighbor?"* Now the Jews regarded only members of their own nation, not foreigners, as their neighbors. Our Lord taught a very different doctrine, and wished us to love and treat all men as neighbors. Therefore He said to the lawyer: *"Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?"* The lawyer was caught, and could not say anything but: *"He that shewed mercy to him."* It must have cost him an effort to acknowledge this fact; was he, a teacher in Israel, to learn of a Samaritan? He thought it humiliating; but our Lord clinched the matter by saying:

"*Go, and do thou in like manner.*" Every man, friend and foe alike, is our neighbor; we ought to love and treat all as brethren.

Questions for Repetition.—Why did Jesus call the disciples blessed? . . . How did a lawyer show that he did not like this remark of our Lord's? . . . What was the lawyer's intention in asking the way to be saved? . . . How does his own answer show that he only wanted to tempt Jesus? . . . What further question did the lawyer ask? . . . How did our Saviour settle the disputed point? . . . What misfortune befell the poor man in the parable? . . . What feeling was betrayed by the behavior of the priest and Levite? . . . How did the Samaritan show his charity? . . . What conclusion did our Lord draw from the parable? . . .

III. Application. 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) The way to eternal life is to love God and one's neighbor. This is Christ's own teaching. What is the chief commandment? . . . (b) The lawyer asked: "Who is my neighbor? What is the answer to this question? . . . (c) Jesus said: "Go, and do thou in like manner." The Samaritan showed his love by his actions. When is our love active? . . . The Samaritan could expect no reward for his kindness; on the contrary, it cost him a good deal. When is our love genuine? . . . The Samaritan helped an enemy in his need; in what words does Christ tell us to love our enemies?

2. According to the Fathers of the Church, the parable has a second meaning. We have all been wounded by sin, and all mankind lay in misery and at the point of death, when the good Samaritan—Jesus Christ—came down from heaven. With love and pity He healed our wounds and brought us to the inn, *i. e.*, the holy Catholic Church, where every care is taken of us. As children of the Church we are infinitely rich in grace. Jesus, our good Samaritan, will return and reward us for all that we have done.

3. *What is the chief thought in this Gospel?* . . . The first twelve Sundays after Pentecost are closely connected, one idea occurs in every Gospel, viz., Christian charity. To-day's thought is *Love and pity in the Kingdom of Christ.*

4. Look for a moment at yourselves. Do you love God above all things? Worldly people love everything more than God, and some day He will say to them: "I know you not." Surely you do not want to hear these terrible words. Learn to love God, who deserves all our love, and the more we love Him, the greater will be our reward in heaven. Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Or have you feelings of bitter dislike, spite and anger in your hearts? Be sure that if you do not live at peace with one another now, you will never enjoy eternal peace in heaven, for there only peace and love prevail, no quarrelling and anger.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Ten Lepers

Introduction.—Let us begin by looking at the map of the Holy Land. Just on the border line between Judea and Samaria is the little town of Ephraim, where our Saviour stayed for some time with His disciples, after the raising of Lazarus. The Jews had already determined to kill Jesus, and as the Pasch was at hand, He began His last journey, and went across Samaria into Galilee, crossed the Jordan and followed its east bank down to Jericho. Thence He went up to Jerusalem to die, halting at Bethany on the way. It was during His last journey that He healed the ten lepers, as we read in to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: Luke xvii, 11-19.

1. The lepers' request.
2. The miraculous cure.
3. Gratitude and ingratitude of the men cured.

II. Explanation: 1. *The lepers' request.*—According to an old tradition this miracle took place at Ginaea, a village in Galilee, near the border of Samaria. Why did ten lepers all come at the same time to Jesus? Had they arranged beforehand to ask His help? No, their meeting with Him was probably accidental. Even at the present day lepers often live together, for a common misery unites people and makes them friends. "Birds of a feather flock together." These lepers most likely formed a little settlement, being brothers in misfortune. Why did they stand afar off? . . . They were strictly forbidden to hold any intercourse with healthy people. If any one came near them, they had to cry out "unclean!" When

the ten lepers saw our Saviour, of whose miracles and compassion they had certainly heard, they began to call out, saying: *"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."* What does their pitiful request show us? . . . In the first place that they were extremely miserable; a leper is indeed a most pitiable object, and we have already spoken about this disease (Cf. 3rd Sunday after Epiphany). In the second place we see that they had great faith and confidence in our Divine Saviour, and wherever Jesus found these two things, faith and confidence, His loving heart could not refuse help.

2. *The miraculous cure.*—Where there is faith, there is help. Jesus said to the lepers: *"Go, show yourselves to the priests."* The law required every leper, who recovered from his disease, to go to Jerusalem and show himself to a priest, that he might be pronounced clean. At the same time he had to take a lamb for sacrifice, and during the ceremony he was sprinkled with the lamb's blood and anointed with oil. The men were not cured at once, yet they did not doubt that they would be cured. On hearing our Lord's words, they set out immediately for Jerusalem. What was the reward of their great faith? . . . Whilst they were still on the way they were cured.

3. *Gratitude and ingratitude of the men cured.*—We can easily imagine how happy they were after being so miserable. Should we not expect them to turn back and thank our Lord for curing them? What happened? Only *one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks.* This is a touching picture and a good example for us all. What made this man's return and gratitude doubly beautiful? . . . The fact that he was not an Israelite, but a Samaritan, and consequently a foreigner. What became of the nine others? They did not express any grati-

tude to their benefactor, although they were all Jews, and much more closely connected with our Saviour than the Samaritan. Jesus Himself was amazed and said: *"Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine?"* Of course He knew what had happened, but He asked the question for the sake of the people, wishing them all to see and know how ungrateful the nine men were. Their shameful ingratitude caused our Lord great pain. How did He complain of it? . . . *"There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger."* The Samaritan's thankfulness, however, was pleasing to Jesus, who commanded him, saying: *"Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole."* These words contain an admonition to the man; they bade him remain strong in faith, and told him that his faith would bring him to life everlasting.

Questions for Repetition.—In what part of the country were the ten lepers healed? . . . At what period in our Lord's life? . . . How did the unhappy lepers express their confidence in Jesus? . . . Why did they not go near Him? . . . Why may the order given them be described as a test of their faith? . . . How was their humble confidence rewarded? . . . How did one of the men show his gratitude for his cure? . . . Why was our Lord particularly pleased with this man's gratitude? . . . What fact aggravated the ingratitude of the others? . . . With what words did Christ take leave of the Samaritan?

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Leprosy is a type of sin, and curing leprosy is a type of taking away sin. When is the soul cleansed from the leprosy of sin? . . . What is the Holy Sacrament of Penance? . . . Can all kinds of sin be remitted? . . . (b) The priests, according to the Jewish law, could only declare a man to be clean and free from leprosy, but under the new law priests have the power really to cleanse the soul from the leprosy

of sin. To whom did Christ give authority to forgive sin? . . . (c) The nine ungrateful men are types of the Jewish nation; the grateful Samaritan is a type of the Gentiles. Christ offered the grace of faith first to the chosen people, but in their ingratitude they refused it. Then God called the Gentiles to the faith, and they accepted it thankfully. Does God give grace to all men? . . . What ought we to do with God's grace? . . . Is it possible to resist grace? . . .

2. *What significance has this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . Our Lord said to the lepers: "Go, and show yourselves to the priests." These words apply to us all; we, too, must go to the priests and reveal our conscience to him in confession. We shall thus be cleansed from the leprosy of sin. This cleansing is the work of the Holy Ghost, so the chief thought for to-day is *the grace of penance in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. There is one lesson that we all ought to learn from to-day's Gospel—the duty of gratitude, which is a virtue, whilst ingratitude is a vice. It is good to be thankful. Thankfulness disposes a giver to bestow fresh favors, but when a person is ungrateful for what he has received, nothing more is given him. We owe gratitude especially to our Father in heaven, our greatest benefactor; for He has given us life and health. Do you thank Him for them? He gives us our daily bread. Are we grateful for it? He has again and again forgiven our sins, and Jesus gives Himself to us in Holy Communion. Are we really grateful to Him for all these favors? O my God, forgive me for being so ungrateful! May I never make a bad return for what Thou hast done for me!

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Warning Against Worry

Introduction.—To-day's Gospel contains some valuable lessons taken from the Sermon on the Mount. Our Lord had said: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume and where thieves do not break through and steal." That is to say: "Beware of avarice and greed!" Our Saviour then went on to warn us against excessive anxiety about the things of this life. This is the passage that we read to-day in the Gospel.

I. Gospel: Matth. vi, 24-33.

1. Impossibility of serving both God and Mammon.
2. Warning against worry.
3. Worry is unnecessary and useless.
4. Need of confidence in God.

II. Explanation: 1. *Impossibility of serving both God and Mammon.*—Our Lord began His instruction by saying emphatically: "*No man can serve two masters.*" We can easily see that this is true. Supposing a man, wanting to earn more wages, entered the service of two masters at once, what would happen? Could he satisfy them both? . . . No, of course not; and things would be still worse if the two masters were enemies. In that case there would be a quarrel at once, and the servant would side with either one or the other. As our Lord says: "*Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one, and despise the other.*" Our Saviour used this metaphor in order to bring be-

fore us vividly the important truth: *"You can not serve God and Mammon."* You know that Mammon means riches, or rather all our worldly possessions and interests collectively; so Jesus really told us that it was impossible to reconcile the service of God with that of the world. God demands that man should serve Him with his whole heart, and no one else. "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart." What class of people may our Saviour have had in view when saying this? . . . The Pharisees, who tried to stand well with the world and with God at the same time. What was the result? They served God only with their lips, and not with their hearts, and that was all wrong. Hence our Saviour solemnly warned His followers and all of us: "You can not serve God and Mammon."

2. *Warning against worry.*—Service of God and service of Mammon agree no better than fire and water; and Christ went on to say: *"Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on."* Does this mean that we ought not to provide ourselves with food and clothing? . . . No, of course we may do so; it is even a duty; but our Lord meant that excessive care and anxiety about such things were unworthy of a Christian. Some people worry until they almost lose their senses, and that is sinful. We must never forget that God's holy providence is watching over us, and that God is like a loving father, taking care of us. He gave us our bodies and our life; will He not give us also what is necessary for their support, viz., food and clothing? Why should we be so full of anxiety? It does no good at all, and Jesus referred to various things to prove this to us.

3. *Worry is unnecessary and useless.*—*"Behold the birds of the air."* . . . Our Saviour was probably thinking of sparrows, which abound in the Holy Land. The comparison applies very well to a

bird of this kind, for it requires a great deal of food every day; but it never worries, it is sure to find enough. Moreover, its grayish brown plumage is sufficient clothing, and our good God causes a fresh suit of feathers to grow every year on each bird. Sparrows have many enemies, but they know how to protect themselves, and do not trouble about things, but live on happily from day to day. Our Lord might well ask: *"Are you not of much more value than they?"* Our heavenly Father cares for little creatures without reason, and is He likely to forget His children? Surely there is no need for anxiety, and it is absolutely useless. *"Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?"* When anyone has stopped growing, he can not make himself any taller, no matter what pains he may take. In the same way can there be any use in being excessively anxious about necessaries of life? Worry makes things worse, never better.

Our Lord drew another comparison to teach us the same lesson. In the Holy Land there are many lilies growing wild in the meadows and pastures; so Jesus used them as a metaphor: *"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."* There are white, sky-blue and bright red lilies. Solomon in all his glory could not be compared with them for beauty. He wore perhaps gold and purple, yet his magnificent robes were the work of human hands, whereas the lily is God's handiwork. Beautiful as the flowers are, they wither quickly; if a hot wind blows for a few hours, their glory soon departs and then they are cast into the oven. (The Holy Land is poor in wood, so even dried plants are used for heating purposes.) God has adorned the lilies with wonderful beauty, although they grow and fade so quickly. Will He not clothe us, His children? We ought to put aside all unnecessary anxieties.

4. *Need of confidence in God.*—Our Lord repeated His warning:

"Be not solicitous therefore." The pagans thought that their gods did not trouble about men, but you are not heathen! You know that God is your Father and that He will watch over you with fatherly love. Therefore you should trust Him. Jesus concluded the instruction by saying: *"Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."* What do these words mean? . . . Think first about saving your souls; that is your chief business, and your Father in heaven will provide what is necessary for your bodies.

Questions for Repetition.—How did Jesus show us very plainly that it is impossible to serve God and the world at the same time? . . . Against what sort of anxiety did our Saviour warn His followers? . . . What metaphors did He use to enforce His meaning? . . . What ought to be the one great business of every Christian? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Christ's discourse reveals one thing to us very clearly—that God watches over everything in the world. What do we mean by saying that God governs the world? . . . God's goodness is displayed even in the case of creatures without reason. What do we mean by saying that God is good? . . . (b) Because God's fatherly care supplies our needs, we ought to hope and trust in Him. May we hope that God will give us temporal possessions too? . . . How do people sin against Christian hope? . . .

2. *In what relation does this Gospel stand to the ecclesiastical year?* . . . Our Lord's teaching is summed up in His last words: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." By the grace of the Holy Ghost we are children of God's Kingdom. To the children of this world the body and life are the things of greatest importance, and the soul matters very little, but to those who are truly God's chil-

dren the salvation of their souls is more important than anything else, and the body and life itself are of less account, because God will look after them. So the chief thought for to-day is: *Our principal business is the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. Think for a moment how you would answer these questions: Has care for your immortal soul been hitherto your chief business in life? Or have you thought more about eating and drinking? Have you not sometimes paid more attention to your clothes than to the robe of sanctifying grace with which your soul should be clad? Many of you will have to confess silently: "Yes, I have been a foolish child of the world in these respects." Think what good all these things will be to you when you come to die, and remember that whatever you do for the welfare of your soul is done for God and for eternity.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Raising of the Widow's Son at Naim

Introduction.—This miracle was worked in the first year of our Lord's public life. After healing the centurion's servant at Capharnaum, Jesus went to Naim, a little town seven or eight miles from Nazareth, and situated on the slope of the mountain known as Little Hermon. It probably owed its name to its beautiful position, for Naim means "charming." Now only a few houses remain, but a chapel, visible from a considerable distance, marks the spot where the great miracle of raising the dead man took place.

I. Gospel: Luke vii, 11-16.

1. The funeral procession.
2. Jesus—Lord of life.
3. The people believe in Him.

II. Explanation: 1. *The funeral procession.*—It was evening when Jesus and His disciples reached Naim. According to the Jewish custom the dead were generally buried after sunset on the day when death occurred, for the great heat in the Holy Land necessitates speedy burial. The little town of Naim was surrounded by a wall, and as our Saviour came near the gate, a sad sight met His eye: *"Behold, a dead man was carried out."* The Jews used to bury their dead in rock-sepulchres outside the towns. Who was the dead man? . . . *The only son of his mother, and she was a widow."* In front of the procession were women uttering lamentations and men playing flutes. Then followed the mother, shedding bitter tears, because she had lost her only joy and com-

fort. Behind her was carried the dead man wrapped in a shroud, only his face being visible; he lay on an open bier, which was escorted by a troop of sympathizing friends and neighbors and some inquisitive spectators. The young man had evidently been a good son; his mother's tears and the sympathy of the townsfolk are evidence of this.

2. *Jesus—Lord of life.*—It was a touching scene, and our Saviour's heart was filled with pity; He felt the poor mother's grief, and perhaps He thought of His own death and of His own mother's indescribable sorrow. With Him, however, pity was no mere feeling, but He went up to the woman and poured comfort into her sad soul. In a gentle, affectionate way He said to her: *"Weep not."* These consoling words came to her like a message from heaven, and inspired her with hope. What happened? Our Saviour made a sign to the men carrying the bier and they stood still, whilst everybody crowded round to see what was going on. Then the Lord of life spoke with authority: *"Young man, I say to thee, arise."* Thereupon the youth opened his eyes, raised himself and looked about; perhaps he asked where he was, and who had recalled him to life. The bystanders scarcely believed the evidence of their own eyes and ears, and said: "Is he really alive?" Even his mother was not sure whether it was true or not, until *Jesus gave him to his mother*—then for the second time she received her son from God, and her sorrow was turned into joy, and she shed tears of happiness instead of grief. How earnestly must both the woman and her son have thanked our Saviour!

3. *The people believe in Jesus.*—What impression did the miracle make upon the people? . . . *"There came a fear on them all."* They were filled with awe and reverence for Christ's majesty. We can easily understand their feeling, and if we had witnessed

such a great miracle, we might have been inclined to exclaim, as St. Peter did: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The inhabitants of Naim did not hesitate to express their real opinion, and said: *"A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people."*

You see how our Lord had accomplished what He wanted. His chief motive in working all His miracles was to lead the people to believe in His being the Messias, and so to bring them to the truth. They believed that He had come from God and in the truth of His words. Whoever can restore the dead to life must be the Lord of life, and His words are true.

Questions for Repetition.—Three instances are recorded in our Lord's life of His raising dead persons; this was the first instance. Who was the dead man who was being carried out for burial? . . . How did the people show their sympathy with His mother in her sorrow? . . . What effect had the sight of the funeral procession upon our Saviour? . . . What word of comfort did Jesus say to the poor mother? . . . How did Christ reveal Himself as Lord of life? . . . What was the result of the miracle upon the people of Naim? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) We see again to-day what we have often seen before, namely that Jesus Christ is both God and Man. How is His human nature revealed? . . . How is His Divine nature revealed? . . . What do we believe about the Person of Christ? . . . How many natures are there in Christ? . . . (b) A great crowd of people followed the dead body; they were performing a work of mercy. Which are the corporal works of mercy . . . Our Divine Saviour lovingly consoled the poor sorrowful mother. This was another work of mercy. Which are the spiritual works of mercy? . . . (c) By His authority Jesus

restored the young man to life, saying to him: "Young man, I say to thee, arise." Christ will restore us, too, in the same way; we all believe in the Resurrection of the body. How long will our bodies remain in the earth? . . . Will all men be raised to life at the last day? . . .

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . It is closely connected with last Sunday's Gospel, which taught us to seek first the Kingdom of God; and to look after our souls, for God will take care of everything else. To-day we see the truth of this doctrine. Our Lord helped the poor mother in her trouble, and God will help us too, so let us trust Him like children, and never distrust Him. God *can* help us, for He is almighty, and He *will* help us, for He has promised to do so. Therefore the chief thought for to-day is *our great Helper in time of need.*

3. The thought of the dead man reminds us that we must die. Perhaps you think death is far away, but are you sure? Death comes, we know not when, where or how. It stands close in front of the old, and it lurks behind the young, but it is sure to come, or rather it is already in us, since we are made of dust, and must return to dust. It is ordained for man once to die. We shall die once, and as we die, so we shall be for ever. We ought often to think of death. Look at your hand; there is a great M marked on it, and this should remind you of two Latin words: *Memento mori,* remember death. In the "Following of Christ," that wonderful little book, we read: "Blessed is the man that hath the hour of his death continually before his eyes, and daily putteth himself in order for death" (I., 23, § 2).

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Christ Heals the Dropsical Man. Parable of the Supper

Introduction.—On the second Sunday after Pentecost we read the parable of the great Supper. When did Jesus speak this parable? . . . Our Lord was probably in the region of Peraea beyond the Jordan, and had already begun His last journey to Jerusalem. There were many Jews in Peraea, and a rich Pharisee invited Jesus to supper on the Sabbath day. Other guests were present, especially lawyers and Pharisees. Before the meal began, the dropsical man was cured, and whilst they were at table our Lord related three parables to the host and the other guests. We read the first of them to-day.

I. Gospel: Luke xiv, 1-11.

This Gospel falls into two parts—the miraculous cure and the parable.

(a) *The miraculous cure.*

1. The Pharisees lay a trap for our Lord.
2. Our Lord lays a trap for the Pharisees.
3. Jesus gives His decision.

II. Explanation: *The Pharisees lay a trap for Jesus.*—How came the Pharisee to invite our Lord to be his guest? What induced him to do so? He may not actually have had a bad intention, but he certainly had not altogether a good one; for the Pharisees were always hostile to Jesus, who had often told them the truth about themselves quite openly, and they could not forget it. Why did our Saviour accept such an invitation? He was too generous to requite evil with evil, and acted like a good father who is al-

ways considerate towards a bad, ungrateful son, hoping to induce him to do better. The giver of the feast may not have had any bad motive, but the other guests were full of malice and treachery; how do we know this? . . . We are told that they *watched* Jesus; they never took their eyes off Him and were trying to discover some point in His behavior that did not agree with their customs. They listened to every word that He said, hoping to find something that contradicted their doctrines. *"Behold, there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy."* This was strange; why should a sick person have been present at a feast? He may have been led thither by his own suffering and his confidence in Jesus, but it is possible that the Pharisees brought him in, because they wanted to lay a trap for Jesus. They knew that if He saw the poor creature He would certainly feel pity and heal him. This was their plot, and, if it succeeded, they intended to denounce our Lord as a Sabbath breaker.

2. *Jesus lays a trap for the Pharisees.*—Our Saviour soon saw the Pharisees' trick. How did He avoid it? He had only to say a few words and they were at once speechless with confusion. He asked them: *"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?"* Could they answer? No, what could they say? They did not venture to say "No," because any one could see that it would be heartless and unreasonable to refuse to cure a sick man on the Sabbath. If they had said "No," they were sure that our Lord would not hesitate to rebuke them, but they would never say "Yes," for they would in that case have contradicted themselves, and their own teaching and opinions. Consequently they said nothing at all, but silence gives consent; what did they consent to by their silence? . . .

3. *Jesus gives His decision.*—As the Pharisees said nothing, our Lord Himself answered the question. *"He, taking him, healed him*

and sent him away." It was soon done, and was the best possible interpretation of God's Commandment. The miracle shows plainly enough that Christ is the Supreme Interpreter of the law, and, if the Pharisees had not been quite blind, they would have said humbly: "We were wrong, but now we believe." They were too proud, however, to act thus, so our Saviour put them to shame a second time by asking: *"Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?* This was a striking comparison, but tell me first what is meant by an ass or an ox falling into a pit. . . . In the Holy Land there are very few springs, so the rain water is stored up in large cisterns, and occasionally animals fall into them. If such a misfortune happened on the Sabbath, would the Pharisees leave the poor creature to drown? No, even they accepted the principle: "Necessity knows no law." To act otherwise would be most unreasonable and in direct opposition to God's will. What was the answer to our Lord's question? *"They could not answer Him,* but their silence implied a great deal. The argument was plain: If it is lawful to save an animal that has fallen into the water, it must be still more permissible to help a poor sick man who is dying of dropsy. We can imagine the rage of the Pharisees at being put to silence. This cure took place before the beginning of the feast, at which our Lord spoke the parable that forms the second part of to-day's Gospel.

(b) *The Parable.*

1. The reason for our Lord's uttering the parable.
2. The parable itself.
3. The lesson taught by the parable.

1. *The reason for uttering the parable.*—St. Luke tells us why our Lord uttered it: *"He spoke a parable also to them that were*

invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table." We generally arrange our guests according to their rank and age, and the places of honor are in the middle of the table, to the right and left of the host. The Jews had a similar custom, and it still prevails in the East. People are extremely careful to give each of the guests his proper place. At the supper of the Pharisee's house there was a great deal of pushing; all claimed to be very strict Pharisees, and each thought himself better than his neighbor, for all alike were puffed up by pride and self-importance. Our Lord seized the opportunity of trying to cure them of these maladies. He knew beforehand that they would take offence, but that did not prevent Him from telling them the truth, and rebuking them for their vices.

2. *The Parable.*—What advice did Jesus give to His fellow guests? . . . *"When thou art invited to a wedding* (notice that our Lord said 'wedding,' and not 'supper,' in order to give less offence), *sit not down in the first place.* It is better to be modest and take the lowest place. What reason did Christ give for this advice? . . . Some other guest may come in, of higher rank than yourself, and more closely connected with the master of the house, and then, if all the other seats are occupied, you may be asked to move and take the lowest place. That would be disagreeable both for the giver of the feast and for you, since you would be humiliated before the other guests. But if you begin by taking the lowest place, the master of the house will honor you by saying aloud: *"Friend, go up higher."*

3. *The lesson taught by the parable.*—The lesson applies not only to feasts, but to our whole life as Christians. The gist of the parable is: Be humble; and our Saviour explained it in the words with which He concluded it: *"Every one that exalteth himself shall*

be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is a great law in God's Kingdom, but the Pharisees refused to understand it, and, regarding themselves as the highest and best of their nation, they expected to be the first in the Kingdom of God. Those will be first who have understood and followed our Lord's teaching: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

Questions for Repetition.—Where did the events recorded in to-day's Gospel take place? . . . With what intention did the lawyers and Pharisees observe our Lord's behavior? . . . How did the Pharisees lay a trap to catch our Saviour? . . . What question did Jesus ask, showing that He saw through their designs? . . . How did Christ practically settle the question about keeping the Sabbath? . . . By means of what metaphor did Jesus show that He understood the Pharisees' narrow-mindedness? . . . What made our Lord utter the parable about the arrangement of guests at a wedding feast? . . . What important lesson does the parable teach us? . . .

III. APPLICATION: 1. *Points for instruction.*—Jesus asked: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" and then He cured the sick man. This shows that works of charity are not a desecration of Sunday. What sort of works are we forbidden to do on Sunday? . . . Our Lord said also: "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?" Under what circumstances are servile works permitted? . . . Christ was present at a supper party on the Sabbath, so we may enjoy ourselves as Christians on the Lord's day. What things desecrate Sunday in a very special way? . . .

2. *What lesson does the Church wish to impress upon us to-day?* . . . Our chief duties are to give to God the things that are God's, and to be careful about our own salvation. Sunday, the

Lord's day, is given to us that we may then attend particularly to these duties, and we ought to keep the day holy by attending Mass and by performing works of Christian charity. The chief thought for to-day therefore is *the observance of Sunday in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled." These words are true for all time, and they contain our Lord's condemnation of the Pharisees. Is there not a little Pharisaical spirit in your hearts? Do you never push yourselves forward? Do you not like to think yourselves better than others? Do you never look down on others? We have no reason to be proud, but every reason to be humble. Learn humility from Jesus! Often say that beautiful little prayer: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine!"

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Great Commandment

Introduction.—Among the Jews there were two great parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The former were very strict and laid too much stress upon the outward practice of religion; the latter were free-thinkers and rejected most of the Jewish doctrines, especially the resurrection of the dead. On the occasion of which we read to-day the Sadducees had just asked our Lord a question, hoping, of course, that He would not be able to answer it. He had, however, given them so plain and emphatic a reply that they could say nothing more, and went away silent. The Pharisees were delighted when they heard that the Sadducees were silenced, so they came to Christ to try if they could puzzle Him with a disputed question. This took place in the Temple, not long before our Lord's death.

I. Gospel: Matth. xxii, 35-46.

1. A lawyer asks which is the chief Commandment.
2. Jesus answers.
3. Jesus asks the Pharisees a question.

II. Explanation: 1. *Question concerning the chief Commandment.*—In the Jewish law some Commandments were great and others little, but people were not agreed as to which was the greatest or chief Commandment. Just at the time of Christ a hot dispute on the subject was going on between learned Jews of different schools of thought. The Pharisees held that whoever outwardly served God, said long prayers and observed all the ritual, was keeping the whole law. Their entire religion consisted of external things. So they came to Christ to ask His opinion. Who asked the

questions? . . . A doctor of the law, in order that the Pharisees might seem to be very anxious to hear the truth, but they were not acting quite honestly; what were they secretly wanting to do? . . . They thought: "Even our greatest doctors of the law have not yet settled this disputed point, so Jesus is sure not to be able to settle it." They wanted to drive our Lord into a corner. What a triumph it would be for them, if He were at a loss for an answer. Then they would be able to boast that they had succeeded where the Sadducees had failed.

2. *Jesus answers.*—However, the Pharisees were utterly mistaken. Without a moment's hesitation Christ settled the matter: "*'Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart.' . . . This is the greatest and the first Commandment. And the second is like to this: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self.'*" We may say that Jesus hit the nail straight on the head, for His answer was so plain and direct that no one could say a word against it. The lawyer was astonished, and at once agreed, as St. Mark tells us (xii, 32), for he cried: "Well, Master, Thou hast said in truth." To love God and one's neighbor is the gist of the whole law of God, and whoever does this fulfils the whole law. As Christ said: "*On these two Commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.*" He who loves God keeps the first three Commandments, and he who loves his neighbor keeps the remaining seven.

3. *Jesus asks the Pharisees a question.*—The Pharisees had fared no better than the Sadducees, and had also been reduced to silence by Jesus, who now made use of the opportunity to instruct His opponents and also perhaps to make them feel ashamed. He spoke openly before the people, so that everyone could hear what He said. What question did He ask the Pharisees? . . . "*What think you of Christ? Whose Son is He?*" The question was short and

apparently simple, and the Pharisees, suspecting nothing, replied: "*David's.*" This was quite right, for Christ was descended from David. So Jesus accepted their answer and said: "*How, then, doth David in spirit call Him Lord?*" In the 109th Psalm David says of the Messias: "The Lord said unto my Lord . . . (that is to say, God said to His Son): 'Sit Thou at My right hand.'" When was that prophecy fulfilled? . . . At Christ's ascension God the Father bestowed His whole majesty upon His Son and made Him Lord and Judge of the world. At the day of judgment Christ's enemies will lie prostrate before Him. What truth did our Lord reveal plainly in these words? . . . He said: "I am both David's Son and God's Son." The Pharisees were speechless and could find nothing to say. Thenceforth they felt no desire to encounter our Lord, and we can well believe that it was not pleasant for the chief men of the nation to be put to shame before the common people.

Therefore on this occasion again Christ proved to His enemies that He was the Messias, the Son of God. If the Pharisees had been honest and had really loved the truth, what would they have done? . . . They would have believed in Christ. But they absolutely refused to believe and remained obstinately in their unbelief.

Questions for Repetition.—What induced the Pharisees to question Jesus? . . . Why did the lawyer ask our Lord which was the chief Commandment? . . . What bad intention underlay the question? . . . How did Christ settle the disputed point? . . . What did Christ mean by saying: "On these two Commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets"? . . . What question did our Lord ask His enemies? . . . With what intention did He ask it? . . . What is the meaning of the words quoted from the Psalms? . . . How did the Pharisees show by their behavior that they were to blame for their unbelief? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) Christ speaks of Himself as David's Son and as God's Son. What do we believe about Him? . . . Why is Christ both Son of God and Son of Man? . . . From whom did He take His human nature? . . . From whom did He take His Divine nature? . . . (b) What is the chief Commandment for us Christians? . . . Why do we call it the chief Commandment? . . . (c) God saith to His Son, "Sit Thou at My right hand," and in the Credo we say: "He sitteth at the right hand of God." What do these words mean? . . . (d) Why did not the Pharisees believe in Christ? . . . They were too proud. To have faith is not enough to know the truth; the will is the chief thing; but humility is also needed.

2. *The Significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year.*—The Kingdom of Christ is the Kingdom of love; we saw that on the first Sunday after Pentecost, and again the twelfth Sunday, in the parable of the good Samaritan. The love of our neighbor proceeds from true love of God. To-day Christ teaches us the importance of both, for they are the great things in Christianity. So the chief thought for to-day is: *Love of God and love of our neighbor form the centre of all Christian life.*

3. *What lesson ought we to learn from this Gospel?* . . . To believe and to love. Faith is a gift for which we ought to pray with humility, as the Apostles did when they said "Lord, increase our faith." We must keep our faith awake, and not let it go to sleep in our hearts. "O my God, I firmly believe all that Thou hast revealed and that Thy holy Catholic Church teaches us to believe." Love of God and love of our neighbor are two wings by which the soul rises to heaven, or, as St. Augustine says, they are the two feet on which we go to God. Let us try above all things to have true faith and true love.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Man Sick of the Palsy

Introduction.—We read to-day of the cure of a man suffering from palsy, a miracle that took place in the first year of our Lord's public ministry. Jesus was on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, in the country of the Gerasenes, when there met Him two men possessed with devils, who cried: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" There was not far from them a herd of swine feeding, so the devils besought our Lord, saying: "If Thou cast us out hence, send us into the herd of swine." And He said to them: "Go." So the devils entered into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down a steep place into the sea and perished in the water. The swineherds fled and told the people in the town what had happened, so they all went out to meet Jesus and begged Him to leave that district (Matth. viii, 28-34). To-day's Gospel tells us what He did next.

I. Gospel: Matth. ix, 1-8.

1. The faith of the sick man.
2. The Divine Physician of souls.
3. The Pharisee's opinion.
4. The miracle.

II. Explanation: 1. *The faith of the sick man.*—There is no difficulty in understanding the introductory words; our Saviour left the country of the Gerasenes and went to Capharnaum. Why is Capharnaum called "His own city?" . . . Because He was fond of the place and regarded it as a second home. As soon as He

arrived there He began to teach, probably in St. Peter's house, when four men came, carrying a sick man, lying helpless on a litter, a sort of portable bed. He was unable to stand or walk, and the crowd was so great that it was impossible for him to be carried into the house, for it was full of people, and the central room, where Jesus was teaching, was full to overflowing. But the poor man's faith was firm, and he insisted upon being taken to our Lord. What were his bearers to do?" "Necessity is the mother of invention," as the proverb says, and at last they thought of a plan. They went up to the terrace round the house, reaching it probably from the house next door, and then, through an opening in the roof, they let the sick man down into the midst of the assembled people. We can imagine how astonished they must all have been!

2. *The Divine Physician of souls.*—Our Saviour was delighted at this display of confidence, and wherever He found great faith He was ready to help. According He spoke at once some wonderful words: "*Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.*" Was it not strange that when the man wanted his body to be cured, our Lord cleansed his soul? Why did He do this? . . . The poor man was sick both in body and soul, and Jesus knew well that he required to be helped in both ways. The palsied man seems to have held the theory taught by the Pharisees, who maintained that all suffering was a punishment for sin and due to sin. Sickness is very often a result of and punishment for sin, but not always. In this case, however, the man's illness was probably due to his sins, and he thought that if only his soul could be cured, he would be well in body also. There was, however, another reason why our Lord cured his soul first. . . . Any malady affecting the soul is much worse than bodily illness, because the soul is of more value than the body.

3. *The Pharisees' opinion.*—Why did our Lord work this miracle? . . . He wanted to reveal Himself unmistakably as the Messias and Son of God by forgiving sins. The scribes were quick enough to perceive His intention, and said at once: "*He blasphemeth.*" How could His words have been blasphemous? . . . No human being can forgive sins, only God can do so, and if any man claims to have power to forgive sins, he is robbing God of what belongs to Him alone. That would certainly be blasphemy. Jesus, however, knew what the Pharisees were thinking, and asked them plainly: "*Why do you think evil in your hearts?*" They must have felt surprised at this question; we might almost expect them to have believed in Christ, but their eyes were not yet opened. So our Lord went on to ask them a very decisive question: "*Whether is easier, to say: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or to say: 'Arise and walk'?*" Which do you think easier? . . . For a man both are equally impossible, but the Pharisees supposed that it was more difficult to cure a sick man by uttering a word. They were thinking: "It is easy enough to say: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Who is to know if they are really forgiven? We can not look at a man's heart and see if they are forgiven." Then Christ proved to them that He really had power to forgive sins.

4. *The miracle.*—Our Saviour had no need to make a long speech; He simply said: "*Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.*" At once fresh life poured through the man's paralyzed body. How earnestly he must have thanked his kind Physician! He could scarcely control himself for joy. What impression did the miracle make upon the bystanders? . . . They were all full of amazement and awe, and gave thanks to God. Some exclaimed: "We never saw the like!" (Mark ii, 12). Others said: "We have seen wonderful things to-day" (Luke v, 26). But what about the

Pharisees? . . . We are not told what effect the miracle had on them, but we know that they persisted in their unbelief. Thenceforth they continually accused our Lord of being a blasphemer. How could they be so wicked!

Questions for Repetition.—Where was the miracle performed of which we read to-day? . . . Why was it impossible for the sick man to reach our Lord? . . . What plan did his bearers devise? . . . What disposition did both the man and his friends show? . . . What was the reward of their confidence? . . . Why did Christ cure the man's soul first and then his body? . . . What charge did the scribes bring against Christ as soon as He spoke of forgiving sins? . . . How did our Lord put His opponents to shame? . . . What question did He ask them? . . . How did Christ show plainly that He had power to forgive sins? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) To-day we have a three-fold proof that Christ is God: He forgives sins; He reads the secret thoughts of men; He cures disease. Thus He possesses all power and all knowledge. (b) The scribes thought that He blasphemed God. What do we mean by blasphemy? . . . (c) Christ asked His opponents: "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" May we without good reason think evil of others or judge them? How do we sin by uncharitable suspicions and rash judgment? . . . Our Lord's miraculuos power and the forgiveness of sins still continue in the Church. What miracle do you know of? . . . To whom has Christ given authority to pardon sins? . . .

2. *What is the significance of this Gospel in the ecclesiastical year?* . . . We see that Christ is the physician of both body and soul, but it is more important to cure the soul than the body, and our Lord lays stress upon this fact. The chief words recorded in this Gospel are those in which He speaks of forgiving sins, and the

Church wants to draw our attention particularly to them, so that the principal thought for to-day is *the power to forgive sins in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. The poor paralyzed man was sick in body and in soul. How happy he must have been on hearing our Saviour say: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Many sinners can find no peace for their wretched souls until they go to Confession, and then they are made happy, when the priest says: "I absolve thee from thy sins . . . go in peace." We can never be thankful enough to God for giving us the Sacrament of Penance. Be careful always to receive it worthily! If ever you are so unhappy as to fall into any mortal sin, do not carry it about with you, but confess it as soon as you possibly can.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parable of the Marriage Feast

Introduction.—On Palm Sunday Jesus made His solemn entry into Jerusalem, and on the following days He went to the Temple every morning to instruct the people, but in the evening He returned with His disciples to Bethany and stayed in the house of His friend Lazarus. It was probably on Tuesday in Holy Week that our Lord was walking about in the colonnade surrounding the court of the Temple, teaching the people who thronged to hear Him. The high priests and elders were extremely annoyed at His having driven out the money changers and traders on the previous day, so they now came up and asked: "By what authority dost Thou these things, and who hath given Thee this authority?" Our Lord replied: "I also will ask you one word . . . the baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men?" They thought within themselves: "If we shall say 'heaven,' He will say to us: 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we shall say 'from men,' we are afraid of the multitude, for all held John as a prophet." So they gave no answer at all, and Jesus availed Himself of this opportunity to give the high priests and Pharisees a solemn warning.

I. Gospel: Matth. xxii, 1-14.

1. The invited guests refuse to come.
2. Strangers are invited.
3. The intruder is cast out.

II. Explanation: (a) *The Parable.* 1. *The invited guests refuse to come.*—Our Lord described the marriage feast of a king,

which was intended to be a festival for all his people. Many of his subjects were invited, especially farmers and business men, for these two classes formed the chief part of the population. By taking part in the rejoicings they would testify their loyalty to their future king. It was usual among the Jews for guests to receive two invitations, the first some time before the entertainment, and the second just before it. Now the guests had all accepted the first invitation, but when the king sent them the second summons they refused to come. Of course the king was offended, but nevertheless he sent his servants out again to beg the guests to come: *"Behold, I have prepared my dinner . . . come ye to the marriage."* But still they would not consent; some went on with their daily work, whilst others actually ill-treated and killed the king's messengers. The monarch's patience was at length exhausted, and the rebels were to be punished. What was done to them? . . . Most of the inhabitants of the town were put to death, their goods were confiscated and their houses burnt. Kings in the East had a right to act thus.

2. *Strangers are invited.*—What was the king to do now? He could not put off the feast, for all preparations had been made for it. He thought of a way to find guests, and sent out his servants again. What were they told to do? . . . There were plenty of people, mostly strangers, on the high roads, and these were to be gathered together and brought to the banquet. A wedding garment was given to each, *and the marriage was filled with guests.*

3. *The intruder is cast out.*—The servants told their master that all was ready, so *the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment.* This man must have been a stranger, who had not taken the trouble to change his own dusty, dirty clothes and to put on the clean garment provided for

him. The king was angry and said: *"Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?"* The man could not answer. What punishment did the king order to be inflicted upon him? . . . He was to be disgraced and cast out into the darkness. The banqueting hall was brightly lighted, but outside it was dark and bitterly cold, so that people there would weep and gnash their teeth.

(b) *The Interpretation.* 1. *The guests originally invited.*—The kingdom of heaven is the Church, God's kingdom on earth, and the king represents God, and his son is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father united His only-begotten Son with the Church, as His bride, and a magnificent feast was to be celebrated. In the Church there are many kinds of food for souls, the doctrines of faith, the Sacraments, and above all the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. Who were the guests originally invited? . . . The Jews were the first people called to the new kingdom of God, and God had invited them under the old dispensation by sending them the prophets, but they would not hear. Then came the Messias, and the marriage feast was prepared. God sent out St. John, the great preacher of penance, that he might again invite the chosen people by proclaiming: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." But they still would not listen. Finally Christ sent His Apostles to convey one more invitation to the Jews, but they paid no attention and went their way, refusing to have anything to do with our Lord and His Church. They cared more for earthly things, *one went to his farm and another to his merchandise.* The Jews even attacked the King's messengers, and caused the Apostles to be scourged and put to death. But they did not escape punishment, and it was not long before all that Jesus foretold in the parable was fulfilled. Foreign invaders came with great armies, thousands of Jews were

killed and their city set on fire. When and how did these things take place? . . .

2. *The strangers invited as guests.*—The Jews were unworthy to be present at the marriage, but others were invited in their stead, and these were strangers. Who were these strangers? . . . Even before the destruction of Jerusalem the Apostles had turned to the Gentiles, who gladly accepted the invitation, so that thousands of them became Christians and children of holy Church. In a very short time *the marriage was filled with guests.*

3. *The wedding garment.*—Who is the stranger without a wedding garment? . . . A man who does not wear the robe of sanctifying grace. We receive this robe at our baptism, when the priest says: "Receive this white garment." It is our business to keep this garment clean, but if ever it is stained with sin, we must cleanse it again in the Sacrament of Penance, for without a wedding garment we can not venture to appear before our heavenly King, nor can we take part in the banquet of eternal life. [This passage refers not to the Church on earth, but to the Church triumphant in heaven.] Alas, for him who dies without sanctifying grace! God will cast him forth into darkness, into the place of torment, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What is then briefly the meaning of the parable? . . . Christ wished to teach: (a) That the Jews would be rejected, and the Gentiles would be invited to enter the kingdom of God. (b) That whoever is invited must lead a Christian life, for those Christians who die without sanctifying grace are also cast out.

Our Saviour ended the parable with a very significant remark: *"Many are called, but few are chosen."* This applies to the Jews, for Christ was speaking of them. All were called to the kingdom of God in this world and in heaven, but only a few were chosen.

These words are the death sentence of the Jewish race. The Pharisees understood and were furious, but what had once been said could not be unsaid.

Questions for Repetition.—What led Christ to utter this parable? Who were the guests first invited . . . What effect had the invitation upon the Jews? . . . What punishment fell upon them in consequence? . . . Who were called instead of the Jews into God's kingdom? . . . Did the Gentiles accept the invitation? . . . Which Christians are excluded from the feast in heaven? . . . What is the meaning of "Many are called, but few are chosen"? . . . What is the point of the whole parable? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—What truths may we learn from this Gospel? . . . (a) By God's grace we are called to be children of His Church; but though He has called us, He will not save us unless we do our part. What must we do to be saved? . . . That man has power to resist grace is quite plain from the action of the Jews, and especially of the Pharisees. (b) It is not enough to have the true faith; we must also live and die as Christians, for without the wedding garment of grace we shall never be admitted to heaven. What is sanctifying grace? . . . (c) Christ speaks of "exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Hell, therefore, really exists. What is hell? . . . In hell man is quite helpless and lost for ever. How do we know that hell lasts for ever? . . . What are the torments of the lost? . . .

2. *What is the chief lesson contained in this Gospel?*—The Church wishes to impress two things upon us to-day: (a) At our baptism we were invited to the marriage feast, and the Holy Ghost clothed us in the wedding garment of grace. (b) We must keep this garment uninjured, for only thus can we obtain admission to

heaven. The chief thought for to-day is, therefore, that *we are called by grace to the kingdom of God.*

3. "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I. Cor. xv, 10). We ought all to speak as humbly as St. Paul. It is only by God's grace that we belong to the Church; let us be thankful. God does not need us, but we need God. If we live as Christians and preserve our precious garment of grace, we shall be showing our gratitude to Him.

Never forget that at your baptism the priest said: "Receive this white garment, and see thou carry it without stain before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayst have eternal life." Be careful to cleanse it from every speck of sin before going to receive our Lord in Holy Communion.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Healing of the Ruler's Son

Introduction.—Our Saviour had been in Judea, but as the Pharisees would not leave Him alone, He went on into Samaria and halted beside Jacob's well in Sichem. Do you remember what took place there? . . . It was there that our Lord talked to the Samaritan woman, who was converted, as well as many other Samaritans. Two days later Jesus left Sichem and went into Galilee, but not to Nazareth. Why not? He said Himself that "a prophet hath no honor in his own country" (John iv, 44), so He went to Cana. What miracle had He already worked there? . . . What other town in Galilee have you heard of? . . . Capharnaum lies to the northeast of Cana, at a distance of about 20 miles. These two towns were the scene of the miracle in to-day's Gospel.

I. Gospel: John iv, 46-53.

1. The father's request.
2. The request granted.
3. The father's return home.

II. Explanation: 1. *The father's request.*—The Holy Land at that time belonged to the Romans, who had appointed several kings to govern the country. The king of Galilee was named Herod, but he was not the Herod who put the Holy Innocents to death. The ruler who came to our Lord was probably one of the king's officers. What did he want with Christ? . . . Grief had brought him to Jesus, because his son was dangerously ill. *He prayed Jesus to come down and heal his son.*

Capharnaum is situated on the Lake of Genesareth, nearly 700 feet below the level of the sea, but Cana is about 170 feet above that level; therefore the road from Cana to Capharnaum is all down-hill. The ruler very likely already knew our Saviour, and had undoubtedly heard of His wonderful miracles.

2. *The request granted.*—What answer did Christ give to the anxious father? . . . *"Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not."* Was not this a strange answer to the man's request? Jesus meant: "I am here not to work miracles, but to give you faith; not to cure your sick, but to save your souls. But I know your weakness, and that without miracles you will not believe, and therefore I work them." What do our Lord's miracles prove to us? . . . Jesus said on one occasion: "Though you will not believe Me, believe the works" (John x, 38). Our Saviour's words were intended to test the ruler's faith and also to rebuke the Jews. The father understood what Jesus meant, and simply repeated his prayer: "Lord, come down before that my son die." This time there was no delay. Jesus said: *"Go thy way, thy son liveth."* But his son had not died; why did our Lord say that he was alive? . . . He meant to say that the young man would have died, unless He had given him fresh life.

3. *The father's return home.*—Notice the strength of the ruler's faith! As soon as Christ spoke he believed and went home. His faith might well put the Jews to shame, and also many Christians. The ruler set off homewards at once, being eager to see his son restored to health, but on the way some of his servants met him with the good news that his son was well. The father's first question was, at what hour did he begin to get better; and they answered: *"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."* Why is St. John careful to state the exact time? . . . In order that

we may see plainly that the dying man's recoverey was due to no natural causes, but to our Lord's power.

What is very striking about this miracle? . . . Jesus used no means at all; He did not even see the sick man, but cured him from a distance. We can well understand that the ruler and all his household believed in Christ. If any one, after such a miracle, still does not believe, he must be totally blind, like the Pharisees.

Questions for Repetition.—Where did the event recorded in to-day's Gospel take place? . . . How far is Cana from Capharnaum? . . . Why did the ruler come to our Lord? . . . What answer did Christ give to his prayer? . . . How can we explain this answer? . . . Why did our Lord grant the ruler's request? . . . What is there remarkable about this miracle? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) The ruler was in great trouble. God can help, even where men can not, so the man came to Jesus and asked His help. He had confidence; when do we pray with confidence? . . . Our Lord did not grant his request at once, but the father went on praying and said: "Lord, come down, before that my son die." Why do we persevere in prayer. . . . (b) Jesus worked a miracle then; why does He not work many miracles now? . . . As long as a young tree is small and weak it needs much care, but when it has grown strong it no longer has to be watered. Jesus planted the Church, like a young tree, and at first it needed a great deal of care and miraculous help, for otherwise it could not have developed. Who will receive the greater reward in heaven, the people who believed because they witnessed miracles, or we ourselves, who believe in Christ, although we see none at all? . . . Jesus said to St. Thomas: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

2. *What does the Church wish to teach us to-day?* . . . To take

the ruler, whose faith was so great, as our example. If we have faith and confidence Christ will pray with us and for us to our heavenly Father, and then we shall obtain all that we need. "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark ix, 22). The chief lesson for us to learn from this Gospel is *the power of faith in the kingdom of Christ.*

3. All that God does is for our good, even if we can not understand it. We see the truth of this doctrine to-day. When the ruler's son was taken dangerously ill, many of his friends probably thought it a great misfortune, and yet it was really a great mercy. How was it a great mercy? . . . The illness brought about the conversion of the whole household. Who would ever have thought it could do so much good? Many people forget God when all goes well with them, but remember Him when they are in trouble. Many, perhaps, have almost forgotten how to pray until forced to do so by their sorrows. Whenever any misfortune befalls a true Christian, he will always look beyond it, and never murmur against God. If ever you are in trouble, or have a bad illness that causes you much pain, remember that everything comes in accordance with God's will, and say most earnestly: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Introduction.—One day during the third year of our Lord's public ministry St. Peter came to Him and asked: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" . . . The scribes taught that it was enough to forgive three times, but Jesus said: "I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times." That is to say, we must always be ready to forgive. Our Lord went on to relate the parable of the unmerciful servant, which is connected with St. Peter's question by the first word: "*Therefore* is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants." Our Saviour wished us to learn from the parable to forgive those who have wronged us, and to do so from our hearts, lest we should suffer the same fate as the unmerciful servant in the parable.

I. Gospel: Matth. xviii, 23-35.

1. The merciful king.
2. The unmerciful servant.
3. The servant's punishment.

II. Explanation: (a) *The Parable.* 1. *The merciful king.*—A rich prince called his servants to settle their accounts; they were not ordinary laborers, but officials, managers of his estates or his representatives in the government. One of them would not come, having something on his conscience, so he had to be brought to the king. How much money did this man owe to his master? . . . A talent was worth more than 1200 dollars, so the whole debt amounted to over twelve millions. [Quite recently, in making exca-

vations near the pool of Bethsaida, a talent was discovered and is now in the convent of the White Fathers at Jerusalem. It is a stone shaped like an egg, about sixteen inches in length, and represents the weight of silver that would be worth a talent.]

Of course the man could not pay such an enormous sum. What order did the king give in order that he might recover at least part of his money? . . . *He ordered the man to be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had.* It was a harsh decision, but as king he was entitled to make it. In his despair the steward fell down at his master's feet and besought him, saying: *"Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."* Could he ever had paid all the debt? No, it was impossible, but the king took pity on him, because he prayed with so much fervor and humility, and not only let him go free, but generously remitted the whole debt.

2. *The unmerciful servant.*—The scene that followed is as horrible as the first was beautiful. The debtor had no sooner gone away than he forgot his lord's mercy and kindness, and, as he walked along, he met a man who owed him some money; how much? . . . A penny or denarius was worth about 20 cents, so the whole debt amounted to perhaps 20 dollars. What a small sum in comparison with his own debt to his master! How did the cruel man treat his debtor? . . . He throttled him, saying: *"Pay what thou owest."* The other, in fear, fell at his feet and besought him, saying: *"Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."* But it was in vain, and the poor man was cast into prison until he should pay the debt. How could anyone be so unmerciful? The king had just forgiven the steward his enormous debt, and he would not forgive another, quite a small debtor; he would not even allow him time to raise the money. However, he had not long to wait for his punishment.

3. *The servant's punishment.*—Other people belonging to the king's court saw and heard all that took place, and were rightly indignant at the hardness of heart displayed by the first debtor. So they went to the king and told him the whole story, and he, having sent for the man whose debt had been forgiven him, reproved him, saying: *"Thou wicked servant; I forgave thee all the debt."* . . . What could the guilty man reply? Could he again ask for mercy? No, he dared not say a word; so the king delivered him to the torturers, and cast him into prison. The punishment was perfectly just.

(b) *Interpretation of the Parable.* 1. *The chief lesson contained in the parable.*—Christ Himself told us what this was: *"So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.* St. Peter had wanted to know how many times he ought to forgive his brother. Our Lord, in reply, spoke this parable, which means: "You must forgive whenever you are injured, and unless you do so God will not forgive you. If you are unmerciful and unwilling to be reconciled with your fellow men, you will suffer the same fate as the servant in the parable, and be delivered to the torturers." What does this last sentence mean? . . . You will have to languish in God's prison. For how long? . . . Until you have paid the whole debt. How can a prisoner pay a debt? . . . He can not earn anything, and so he can never pay it. Can a hardhearted man shut up in God's prison ever atone for his guilt? . . . No, he will have to suffer for ever. The whole parable is an illustration and expansion of the fifth petition in the Our Father: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

2. *The second lesson contained in the parable.*—The king in the parable is God, and the servant who owes him ten thousand talents

is a man in mortal sin. This sin is so great that man can never atone for it; it is a deadly offence deserving the punishment of death in hell. But if the sinner humbly acknowledges his fault and confesses it with true contrition, God will be merciful, and not only forgive the sinner, but also remit the debt, that is to say, the punishment due to sin.

Questions for Repetition.—What did St. Peter think about the duty of pardoning others? . . . How did Christ teach St. Peter to take a higher view of the matter? . . . How much did the servant owe his master, the king? . . . How did the king propose to secure at least partial payment? . . . How did the king show his generosity? . . . How did the servant treat his fellow servant? . . . What punishment was inflicted upon him for his cruelty? . . . What is the chief lesson to be learned from the parable? . . . How does God punish an obstinate refusal to be reconciled? . . . Who is like the man owing the enormous debt? . . . How does God show his mercy to people in mortal sin? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—This parable contains some important truths. (a) A Christian's duty is to forgive. To be unforgiving is not Christian. In what words did our Lord teach us to love our enemies? . . . (b) Many people think that sin is a trifle, and even a mortal sin does not matter much; but God judges otherwise, as we see in this Gospel. What constitutes the malice of mortal sin? . . . What are the consequences of mortal sin? . . . (c) The king in his generosity forgave the debt, because he saw the servant's good will. God will treat us in the same way, if we have good will, contrition and purpose of amendment. Why should we repent of our sins? . . . What must a sinner resolve to do? . . . (d) Christ is the Son of God; which

words state this fact plainly? . . . "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you."

2. *What lesson does the Church desire to impress upon us to-day?* . . . The same lesson that our Lord taught so earnestly in the parable—forgive, and you shall be forgiven. This is a very important lesson affecting the life of every Christian. The chief thought, therefore, for to-day is: *Forgiveness in the kingdom of Christ.*

3. "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." Apply these words to yourselves. Are you not sometimes hard and unforgiving? Some children keep up a grudge against one another for weeks, and even go so far as to wish each other evil. This is a mortal sin. How can they say the Our Father honestly? How can they utter the words: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us"? If they say the words, they are liars and hypocrites, and they can not possibly make a good confession, since, unless they resolve to forgive, their confession is not valid in God's sight. "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven" (Luke vi, 37).

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Tribute Money

Introduction.—On Palm Sunday our Lord was brought to Jerusalem in triumph, and He spent the next few days in the Temple teaching the people. Like a dying father giving his last solemn admonitions to his children, our Saviour desired to urge His fellow countrymen once more to repent and turn to Him. It was at this time that He told the Jews the very instructive parable of the royal marriage feast, inviting them to come into His kingdom, but they would not listen, and therefore Jesus warned them of the judgment awaiting them, when armies of foreigners would come and burn their city. The Jews were furious at this prophecy and began to plot revenge. To-day's Gospel tells us what they did.

I. Gospel: Matth. xxii, 15-21.

1. The Pharisees try to ensnare Jesus.
2. The question regarding tribute money.
3. Jesus detects their trickery.
4. Jesus answers the question.

II. Explanation: 1. *The Pharisees try to ensnare Jesus.*—A man who lays a trap for another is very apt to fall into it himself. The story contained in to-day's Gospel is a good illustration of this truth. Let us begin by considering what led up to the conversation that we read to-day. *The Pharisees . . . consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech.* What were our Lord's enemies trying to do? . . . They wanted to engage Him in conversation, hoping that He would say something wrong, which would

enable them to bring a charge against Him, either before the government or before the Jewish nation. How did they set to work? . . . *They sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians.* The Pharisees laid their plans cautiously; they sided with the Jews against the Romans, whilst the Herodians were followers of Herod and friendly to the Romans. The Pharisees therefore represented the national party and the Herodians the imperial party. Together they came to Jesus, asking:

2. *The question regarding tribute money.—"Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou dost not regard the person of men."* Even our Lord's enemies were obliged to acknowledge that He taught the truth, stating facts simply, and caring not whether what He said pleased His hearers or not. Secondly, He had no respect of persons, but spoke the truth fearlessly before powerful people. Why were His enemies so flattering all at once? Such behavior is somewhat suspicious, for on other occasions they were not at all friendly. What they said was true, but a treacherous design lurked behind their praise. They wanted to curry favor with Jesus and put Him off His guard, so that He might express an opinion frankly. After all this flattery they asked their question, pretending that they wished Him to settle some difficulty affecting their conscience. *"Tell us, therefore,"* they said, *"is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?"* This was a very cunningly devised question. Why? . . . The Jews used to pay the Temple tax every year for the maintenance of Divine worship, but in addition they had to pay tribute to the Roman emperor. Now the Pharisees thought that it was wrong to pay this tribute, because, being God's chosen people, they ought not to pay anything to a foreign ruler, and especially not to a pagan emperor. Most of the

Jews agreed with the Pharisees on this point, so the question was far from simple. If our Lord had said: "Yes, you must pay the tribute," the Pharisees would have declared that He was siding with the emperor against His own nation. If, on the other hand, Jesus had said: "No," the Herodians would have accused Him of siding with the Jews against the Romans. What would have happened? . . . In the first case, the Pharisees would have had it in their power to set the people against our Lord; in the second, the Herodians would have given information to the imperial government. We can easily picture the delight of the treacherous Jews at this trap so skilfully laid for our Lord. They must have laughed and whispered to one another: "He will not escape us this time; we have caught Him."

3. *Jesus detects their trickery.*—They had just been flattering our Saviour and calling Him a true speaker; now they were to hear the truth. He exclaimed: *"Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites?"* Why did Christ call them hypocrites? . . . Because they pretended to want to know the truth and to have their conscientious difficulty settled, whilst really they were full of malice and wickedness, desiring to ensnare and destroy our Lord. He read what was in their hearts, and did not hesitate to tell them the truth plainly.

4. *Jesus answers the question.*—Our Lord was going to decide the matter and said: *"Show Me the coin of the tribute, and they offered Him a penny."* The coin was a denarius (20 cents) bearing the head and name of the Roman Emperor Augustus. All the bystanders listened eagerly to hear what Jesus would say. He asked quietly: *"Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him "Caesar's"; then He saith to them: "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."* What did Christ mean? . . . He meant: You see on the coin the

head of the emperor; so he is your ruler, and you ought to pay him tribute. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; but as God is your Lord, render to God the things that are God's. This was a wonderful answer, full of wisdom. The dangerous trap laid for Jesus was destroyed at once. What effect do you think our Lord's words had upon His enemies? . . . They must have been astonished and have slunk away ashamed and silent. The Pharisees were no doubt furious when their disciples brought back this answer. What had they accomplished? . . . Nothing at all, and they had no reason for making a complaint against Jesus either to the people or to the government. They might have avoided being thus put to confusion, but he who lays a snare for others is apt to fall into it himself.

Questions for Repetition.—When was the conversation about the tribute money held? . . . What had Jesus prophesied that had roused the anger of the Pharisees? . . . What plan did Christ's enemies form for taking their revenge? . . . Why did the Pharisees send some Herodians as well as their own disciples to our Lord? . . . What flattering remarks did these messengers make in order to put Christ off His guard? . . . What made the Pharisees' question a very dangerous one for our Lord to answer? . . . What was Christ's reply? . . . How did His words put His enemies to shame? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—In to-day's Gospel we learn two important lessons. (a) "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." What are a Christian's duties to the government? . . . From whom do all temporal rulers derive their authority? . . . (b) "Render to God the things that are God's." What do we owe to God? . . . Inward and outward honor. How do we honor God inwardly? . . . Outwardly? . . . (c) "Master,

we know that Thou art a true speaker." What praise from an enemy's lips! What do we mean by saying that God is truth? . . . (d) "Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites?" Jesus reads all the thoughts of our hearts; He knows everything. How do people sin by hypocrisy?

2. *What connection has this Gospel with the ecclesiastical year?* . . . We all form one great, holy family, as we belong to the Church, and we owe this favor to the Holy Ghost. But we also belong to our country, and as earthly states exist by God's will they, too, are the work of the Holy Ghost. As members of the Church it is our sacred duty to render to God the things that are God's, and as citizens of a state we are bound to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. So the chief lesson and thought for to-day is to do *our duty both towards the kingdom of Christ and towards the state.*

3. Remember what the early Christians suffered, yet they were always loyal subjects of the emperor, bearing everything with heroic fortitude. St. Peter bade them "Fear God and honor the king" (I. Peter ii, 17); but they were no less loyal to God and preferred to lose anything rather than be false to Him. Have you, too, this really Christian spirit? Do you render to God the things that are God's? Are you conscientious about attending to your religious duties on Sunday? What a disgrace and sin it is to make idle excuses for staying away from Mass! Render to God the things that are God's, and He will give you heaven as your reward.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Raising of Jairus' Daughter

Introduction.—Not long ago we read of something that took place whilst our Saviour was in the land of the Gerasenes, to the East of the Sea of Galilee. What was it? . . . (*Cf.* Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost). At the request of the inhabitants Jesus crossed the lake and returned to Capharnaum, where He found many people assembled on the shore waiting to hear Him. Whilst He was instructing them, a man came forward who was in great trouble, because his little daughter had just died; and, as we read in to-day's Gospel, Jesus restored her to life.

I. Gospel: Matth. ix, 18-26.

1. The ruler's request.
2. Cure of the sick woman.
3. Raising of the dead girl.

II. Explanation: 1. *The ruler's request.*—You know that the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem was the centre of Jewish worship; but most of the Jews could seldom visit it, and consequently a smaller place of worship, called a synagogue, was built in each town of any importance. All pious Jews attended the synagogue on the Sabbath day, in order to pray, to hear the word of God and to glorify God by singing psalms. Three "rulers" were appointed for every synagogue, and it was their business to keep the place in good order and see that the services were properly performed. Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue at Capharnaum. What was troubling him just then? . . . He said to Jesus: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead." St. Mark says that she was at the point of

death, and St. Luke tells us that she was about twelve years old. What did the poor father ask our Lord to do? . . . *"Come, lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live."* What do these words tell us about Jairus? . . . That he trusted Jesus; yet at the same time he desired Him to lay His hand upon the child. We are all alike; we all want to see and touch things, and that is why, in instituting the Sacraments, our Lord connected His graces with outward signs. *"And Jesus, rising up, followed him with His disciples."* How kind our Lord was! Always ready to do a work of mercy.

2. *Cure of the sick woman.*—Of course all the people ran after our Saviour as He went towards the ruler's house, and in the midst of the throng a woman came close up behind Him. She had been ill for twelve years, and had spent all that she had on physicians, and was nothing the better, but rather worse (Mark v, 26). This time, however, she had come to the right physician, and no sooner had she touched the hem of our Lord's garment than fresh life was communicated to her poor suffering body, and she knew that she was cured. St. Mark tells us that Jesus turned round, saying: "Who hath touched My garments?" Surely this was a strange question! Our Saviour was surrounded by a crowd of people; how could He ask who had touched Him? . . . He wanted the woman to give glory to God publicly, and with fear and trembling she came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. Why did our Lord work this miracle? . . . Because of the woman's boundless confidence in Him. She had said to herself: "If I shall but touch His garment, I shall be whole," and He told her why she was cured: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

3. *Raising of the dead girl.*—Meantime our Lord had reached the ruler's house, and heard the sound of the death dirge, for the

Jews used to hire flute players and mourners to make noisy lamentations. What did Jesus do with these people? . . . He turned them all out, saying: *"Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth."* They laughed Him to scorn for these words, but were they true? . . . Yes, for Christ, the Lord of life, the girl was not dead, since by one authoritative word, and even by an act of His will, He could restore her to life. There was also another reason for turning out the minstrels and mourning women; they did not deserve to witness the miracle of raising the dead. Even the disciples were not all admitted, only three, Peter, James and John, and the child's father and mother were allowed to be present (Luke viii, 51). Then the miracle was effected, for, when Jesus took the girl by the hand, she arose alive. Divine power proceeding from Him had inspired her with new life. Our Saviour charged her friends to keep the matter secret, but it was impossible. The news spread like wild-fire all over the country.

Questions for repetition.—What made one of the rulers of the synagogue come to Jesus? . . . How did Jairus show his confidence in Christ? . . . How did our Lord receive the father's request? . . . What happened on the way to the ruler's house? . . . Why did not the poor woman appeal publicly to our Lord as Jairus had done? . . . How was her confidence rewarded? . . . What was going on in the ruler's house? . . . How did Christ make Himself known as Lord of life and death? . . . Who witnessed the raising of the dead girl? . . . What was the consequence of this miracle? . . .

III. Application: 1. *Points for instruction.*—(a) The sick woman said to herself: "If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed," and she was right. A similar miracle occurred at the finding of the Cross. . . . Also in the lives of the saints we read of

similar things. This is why we may venerate relics. Why do we venerate relics? . . . Which are the most precious relics? . . . (b) "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth." For all Christians death is really only a sleep. Why? . . . "The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v, 28, 29). How long will our bodies remain in the earth? . . . Will every body rise again at the last day? . . .

2. *How does this Gospel suit this period of the year.*—The ecclesiastical year is nearly over, and we ought to think of death. We need not be afraid of it, because Christ is with us; He can cure our diseases and He will certainly raise us again from the dead. All Souls' Day comes about this time, when we remember our dead friends, and many of us will shed tears of sorrow; but the hope of rising again and seeing those we love is like a ray of sunshine in our hearts. The chief thought for to-day is *the Resurrection in the Kingdom of Christ.*

3. *God helps those who trust Him.*—We have two instances of this in to-day's Gospel. How little do we trust Him! Surely the sick woman puts us to shame, for she said: "If I shall but touch His garment, I shall be whole." We can do more than touch His garment, more even than touch His sacred Body; we can receive Jesus Himself into our hearts in holy Communion. He desires to be united with us, so that we, like St. Paul, may say: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii, 20). There is nothing that we might not obtain by prayer, if only we had in our hearts faith too firm ever to be overthrown.

THE SUNDAY GOSPELS

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Luke xxi. 25-33.—At that time Jesus said to his disciples: There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon them. For the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude: See the fig-tree and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Matt. xi. 2-10.—At that time, when John had heard in prison the works of Christ: sending two of his disciples, he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or do we look for another? and Jesus making answer said to them, Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, What went you out into the desert to see. a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings? But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my Angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

John i. 19-28.—At that time the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to John, to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny; and he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then?

Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him, Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not; the same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred beforeme, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Luke iii. 1-6.—In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas; the word of the Lord came to John the son of Zachary in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins; as it is written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY.

Luke ii. 33-40.—At that time, Joseph and Mary the mother of Jesus, were wondering at those things, which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted: and thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord; and spoke of him to all that

looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth. And the child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him.

SUNDAY AFTER THE CIRCUMCISION

Matt. ii. 19-23.—But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the child. Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarene.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Luke ii. 42-52.—And when Jesus was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast (* v. 43), and having fulfilled the days when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem: and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him, Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them, How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

John ii. 1-11.—At that time, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples,

to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her, Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come?. His mother saith to the waiters, Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures a piece. Jesus saith to them, Fill the wather-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them, Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast: and they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him, Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. viii. 1-13.—At that time, when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and behold, a leper came and adored him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean: and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him, See thou tell no man: but go, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them (* v. 5). And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer, said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him, Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee; and the servant was healed at the same hour.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. viii. 23-27.—At that time, when Jesus entered into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but he was asleep. And they came to him and awaked him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then raising up, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying, What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. xiii. 24-30.—At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to the multitudes: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came, and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the goodman of the house coming, said to him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence, then, hath it cockle? And he said to them, An enemy hath done this. And the servant said to him, Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said, No: lest perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Matt. xiii. 31-35.— At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to the multitudes: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which is the least indeed of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable he spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude, and without parables he did not speak to them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Matt. xx. 1-16.—At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle, and he said to them, Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just: and they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour, he went out, and found others standing; and he saith to them, Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them, Go ye also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward, Call the laborers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying, These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering, said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Luke viii. 4-15.—At that time, when a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto him, he spoke by a similitude: The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns; and the thorns growing up with it, chocked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said, To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables; that seeing, they may not see, and hearing, may not under-

stand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots, for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way, are chocked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground are they who, in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Luke xviii. 31-43.—At that time, Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man: for he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out much more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said, Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made the whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Matt. iv. 1-11.—At that time, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming, said to him, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said, It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in

every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain; and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said to him, All these will I give thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him, Begone, Satan, for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left him; and behold, angels came, and ministered to him.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

Matt. xvii. 1-9.—At that time, Jesus took Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshaded them: and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid: and Jesus came and touched them, and said to them, Arise, and fear not. And they lifting up their eyes saw no one, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

Luke xi. 14-28.—At that time, Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke, and the multitudes were in admiration at it; but some of them said, He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall; and if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out

devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace; but if a stronger than he comes upon him, and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to him, Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

John vi. 1-15.—At that time, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias; and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him; for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him, There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered up, therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus

had done, said, This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force, and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone.

PASSION SUNDAY.

John viii. 46-59.—At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews, Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews therefore answered, and said to him, Do not we say well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man keep my word he shall not see death for ever. The Jews therefore said, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him; but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

PALM SUNDAY.

Matt. xxi. 1-9.—At that time, when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto mount Olivet, he sent two disciples, saying to them, Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me. And if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them; and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the

disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them; and they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way: and the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

Epist. Philip. ii. 5-11.—Brethren, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. (* v. 8.) He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

EASTER SUNDAY.

Mark xvi. 1-7.—At that time, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen: and they said one to another, Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe, and they were astonished: who saith to them, Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him: but go, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see him, as he told you.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

John xx. 19-31.—At that time, when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them, Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he shewed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again, Peace be to you: as the Father

hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.

(* v. 24.) Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas, Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered, and said to him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith to him, Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. (*) Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that, believing, you may have life in his name.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

John x. 11-16.—At that time, Jesus said to the Pharisees, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep: and he hireling flieth, because he is a hireling, and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

John xvi. 16-22.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, A little while, and now you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me; because I go to the Father. Then some of the disciples said one to another, What is this that he saith to us, A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me; and because I go to the Father?

They said therefore, What is this that he saith. A little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him: and he said to them, Of this do you inquire among yourselves because I said, A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me? Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you know indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

John xvi. 5-14.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, I go to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in me; and of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see me no longer; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now: but when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall shew you. He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it to you.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

John xvi. 23-30.—At that time, Jesus saith to his disciples, Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name: ask, and you shall proverbs: the hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will shew you plainly of the Father. In that day, you shall ask in my name; and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His

disciples say to him, Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou comest forth from God.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

John xv. 26 to xvi. 4.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me; and you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you many not be scandalised. They will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that, when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you.

PENTECOST.

John xiv. 23-31.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, If any one love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words: and the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's, who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you: but the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you, I go away and I come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke vi. 36-42.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be

forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal it shall be measured to you again. And he spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master; but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master. And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not? or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xiv. 16-24.—At that time, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant, at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out, and see it; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant, Got out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of these men that were invited shall taste of my supper.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xv. 1-10.—At that time, the publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him: and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying, What man of you hath a hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing, and coming home, call together his friends and

neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost? So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke v. 1-11.—At that time, when the multitude pressed upon Jesus, to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets; and going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land: and sitting, he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon, answering, said to him, Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing, but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes; and their net broke: and they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them; and they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes which they had taken: and so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedec, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon, Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. v. 20-24.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, Except your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool,

shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Mark viii. 1-9.—At that time, when there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had nothing to eat, calling his disciples together, he saith to them, I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way: for some of them came from afar off. And his disciples answered him, From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? who said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them: and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and he blessed them. And they did eat, and were filled; and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets: and they that had eaten were about four thousand; and he sent them away.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. vii, 15-21.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xvi. 1-9.—At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable. There was a certain rich man who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods: and he called him, and said to him,

How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able: to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said, A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another. And how much dost thou owe? Who said, A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him, Take thy bill, and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you, Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xix. 41-47.—At that time, when Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying, If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the Temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the Temple.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xviii. 9-14.—At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted to themselves as just, and despised others: Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; as also is this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I posses. And the publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying, O God, be merciful to me a sinner.

I say to you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Mark vii. 31-37.—At that time, Jesus going out of the coasts of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb, and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him, Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened; and immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it; and so much the more did they wonder, saying, He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke x. 23-37.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said to him, Thou hast answered rightly: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor? (v. 30.*) Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead; and it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him: and seeing him, was moved with compassion; and going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care

of him: and the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among robbers? But he said, He that shewed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him, Go, and do thou in like manner.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xvii. 11-19.—At that time, as Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee: and as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off, and lifted up their voice, saying, Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom when he saw, he said, Go, shew yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God: and he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return, and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him, Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. vi. 24-33.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is it not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air; for they neither sow nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith! Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? for after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke vii. 11-16.—At that time Jesus went into a city called Naim; and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city were with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her, Weep not. And he came near, and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And he said, Young man, I say to thee, Arise: And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all; and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Luke xiv. 1-11.—At that time, when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the sabbath-day to eat bread, they watched him. And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy: and Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? But they held their peace: but he taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath-day? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them, When thou are invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him; and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who inviteth thee cometh he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matt. xxii. 35-46.—At that time, the Pharisees came to Jesus, and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him, Master which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy

whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think you of Christ; whose son is he? They say to him, David's. He saith to them, How then doth David, in spirit, call him Lord; saying, The Lord saith to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. ix. 1-8.—At that time, Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water, and came into his own city. And behold, they brought to him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy, Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold, some of the scribes said within themselves, He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? whether it is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said he to the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. xxii. 2-14.—At that time, Jesus spoke to the chief priests and the Pharisees in parables, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son: and he sent his servants, to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage. But they neglected: and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; and the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry; and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were

not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good; and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment: and he saith to him, Friend, how comest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? but he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters, Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

John iv. 46-53.—At that time, there was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him, Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him, Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him, and they brought word, saying, that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. xviii. 23-35.—At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents: and as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go; and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying, Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay

thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved; and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

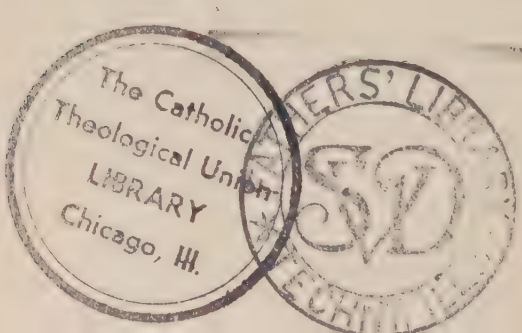
Matt. xxii. 15-21.—At that time the Pharisees went and consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said, Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them, Whose image and superscription is this? They say to him, Cæsar's. Then he saith to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. ix. 18-26.—At that time, as Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold, a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying, Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with his disciples. And behold a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself, If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said, Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a tumult, he said, Give place; for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

TWENTY-FOURTH OR LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Matt. xxiv. 15-35.—At that time, Jesus said to his disciples, When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (he that readeth, let him understand), then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains; and he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take any thing out of his house; and he that is in the field, let him no go back to take his coat. And wo to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the sabbath; for there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be: and unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the sake of the elect, those days shall be shortened. Then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; do not believe him: for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand: if, therefore, they shall say to you, Behold, he is in the desert, go ye not out; Behold, he is in the closets, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, he sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty: and he shall send his angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all hese things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.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